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BLACKWOOD'S

MAGAZINE.

VOL. CXCVIII.

JULY—DECEMBER 1915.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD & SONS, EDINBURGH;
AND
37 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

1915.

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EDINBURGH:

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD & SONS, 45 GEORGE STREET,
And 37 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

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THE FIRST HUNDRED THOUSAND.

BY THE JUNIOR SUB.

XIV. THE BACK OF THE FRONT.

I.

The last few days have afforded us an excellent opportunity of studying the habits of that ubiquitous attendant of our movements, the Staff Officer.

He is not always a real Staff Officer—the kind that wears a red hatband. Sometimes he is an obvious "dug-out," with a pronounced *embonpoint* or a game leg. Sometimes he is a mere stripling, with a rapidly increasing size in hats. Sometimes he is an ordinary human being. But whoever he is, and whatever his age or rank, one thing is certain. He has no mean: he is either very good or very bad. When he is good he is very good indeed, and when he is bad he is horrid. He is either Jekyll or Hyde.

Thrice blessed, then, is that unit which upon its journey to the seat of war, encounters only the good of the species. To transfer a thousand men, with secrecy and despatch, from camp to train, from train to ship, from ship to train, and from train to a spot near the battle line, is a task which calls for the finest organisation and the most skilful administration. Let it be said at once that our path to our present address has been almost universally lined with Jekylls. The few Hydes whom we have encountered are by this time merely a subject for amusing anecdote.

As for the organisation of our journey—well, it was formulated upon Olympus, and was marked by those Olympian

touches of which mention has been previously made. For instance, immense pains were taken, by means of printed rules and official memoranda, to acquaint us with the procedure to be followed at each point of entrainment or embarkation. Consequently we set out upon our complicated pilgrimage primed with explicit instructions and ready for any emergency. We filled up forms with countless details of our equipment and personnel, which we knew would delight the heart of the Round Game Department. We divided our followers, as directed, into Loading Parties, and Ration Parties, and Hold Parties, and many other interesting subdivisions, as required by the rules of the game. But we had reckoned without the Practical Joke Department. The Round Game Department having furnished us with one set of rules, the Practical Joke Department prepared another, entirely different, and issued them to the officers who superintend such things as entrainment and embarkation. At least, that is the most charitable explanation of the course of action adopted by the few Mr Hydes whom we encountered.

Two of these humourists linger in the memory. The first was of the type which is admiringly referred to in commercial circles as a hustler. His hustling took the form of beginning to shout incomprehensible orders almost before the train had drawn up at the platform. After that he passed from party to party, each of which was working strenuously under its own sergeant, and commanded them (not the sergeant) to do something else, somewhere else — a course of action naturally calculated to promote unity and celerity of action all round. A perspiring sergeant who ventured to point out that his party were working under the direct orders of their Company Commander, was promptly placed under arrest, and his flock enjoyed a welcome and protracted breathing-space until an officer of sufficient standing to cope with Mr Hyde — unfortunately he was Major Hyde —could be discovered and informed.

The second required more tactful handling. As our train-load drew up at the platform, the officer in charge —it was Captain Blaikie, supported by Bobby Little — stepped out, saluted the somewhat rotund Colonel Hyde whom he saw before him, and proffered a sheaf of papers.

"Good-morning, sir," he said. "Here is my train statement. Shall I carry on with the unloading? I have all my parties detailed."

The great man waved away the papers magnificently. (To be just, even the Jekylls used to wave away our papers.)

"Take those things away," he commanded, in a voice which made it plain that we had encountered another hustler. "Burn them, if you like! Now listen to me. Tell off an officer and seventy men at once."

"I have all the necessary parties detailed already, sir."

"Will you listen to me?" roared the Colonel. He turned to where Captain Blaikie's detachment were drawn up on the platform. "Take the first seventy men of that lot, and tell them to stand over there, under an officer."

Captain Blaikie gave the necessary order.

"Now," continued Colonel Hyde, "tell them to get the horses out and on board that steamer at once. The rest of your party are to go by another steamer. See?"

"Yes, sir, perfectly. But ——"

"Do you understand my order?" thundered the Colonel, with increasing choler.

"I do, sir," replied Blaikie politely, "but——"

"Then, for heaven's sake, carry on!"

Blaikie saluted.

"Very good, sir," he answered. "Mr Little, come with me."

He turned upon his heel and disappeared rapidly round a corner, followed by the mystified Bobby.

Once out of the sight of the Colonel, Captain Blaikie halted, leaned against a convenient pillar, and lit a cigarette.

"And what do you think of that?" he inquired.

Bobby told him.

"Quite so," agreed Blaikie. "But what you say helps nobody, though doubtless soothing to the feelings. Now listen, Bobby, and I will give you your first lesson in the Tactical Handling of Brass Hats. Of course we might do as that dear old gentleman suggests, and send seventy horses and mules on a sea voyage in charge of a party of cooks, signallers, and machine-gunners, and let the grooms and drivers go with the bicycles and machine-guns and field kitchens. But I don't think we will. Nobody would enjoy the experiment much—except perhaps the mules. No: we will follow the golden rule, which is: When given an impossible job by a Brass Hat, salute smartly, turn about, and go and wait round a corner for five minutes. Then come back and do the job in a proper manner. Our five minutes are up: the coast should be clear. Come along, Bobby, and help me to exchange those two parties."

But we encountered surprisingly few Hydes. Nearly all were Jekylls — Jekylls of the most competent and courteous type. True, they were inclined to treat our laboriously completed returns with frivolity.

"Never mind those things, old man," they would say. "Just tell me who you are, and how many. That's right: now I know all about you. Got your working parties fixed up? Good! They ought to have everything cleared in a couple of hours. I'll see that a ration of hot tea is served out for them. Your train starts at a quarter past seven this evening —remember to call it nineteen-fifteen, by the way, in this country—and you ought to be at the station an hour before the time. I'll send you a guide.

What a fine-looking lot these chaps of yours are! Best lot I've seen here for a very long time. Working like niggers, too! Now come along with me for ten minutes and I'll show you where to get a bite of breakfast. Expect you can do with a bit!"

That is Brass-Hat Jekyll—officer and gentleman; and, to the eternal credit of the British Army, be it said that he abounds in this well-conducted campaign. As an instance of his efficiency, let the case of our own regiment be quoted. The main body travelled here by one route, the transport, horses, and other details by another. The main body duly landed, and were conveyed to the rendezvous—a distant railway-junction in Northern France. There they sat down to await the arrival of the train containing the other party; which had left England many hours before them, had landed at a different port, and had not been seen or heard of since.

They had to wait exactly ten minutes!

"Some Staff—what?" as the Adjutant observed, as the train lumbered into view.

II.

Most of us, in our travels abroad, have observed the closed trucks which are employed upon French railways, and which bear the legend—

Hommes . . 40
Chevaux . . 8

Doubtless we have wondered, idly enough, what it must feel like to be one of the forty *hommes*. Well, now we know.

When we landed, we were packed into a train composed of fifty such trucks, and were drawn by a mighty engine for a day and a night across the pleasant land of France. Every six hours or so we were indulged with a *Halte Répas*. That is to say, the train drew up in a siding, where an officer with R.T.O. upon his arm made us welcome, and informed us that hot water was available for making tea. Everybody had two days' rations in his haversack, so a large-scale picnic followed. From the horse-trucks emerged stolid individuals with canvas buckets—you require to be fairly stolid to pass the night in a closed box, moving at twenty miles an hour, in company with eight riotous and insecurely tethered mules — to draw water from the hydrant which supplied the locomotives. The infant population gathered round, and besought us for "souvenirs," the most popular taking the form of "biskeet" or "bully-bœuf." Both were given freely: with but little persuasion our open-handed warriors would have fain squandered their sacred "emergency ration" upon these rapacious infants.

After refreshment we proceeded to inspect the station. The centre of attraction was

the French soldier on guard over the water-tank. Behold this same sentry confronted by Private Mucklewame, anxious to comply with Divisional Orders and "lose no opportunity of cultivating the friendliest relations with those of our Allies whom you may chance to encounter." So Mucklewame and the sentry (who is evidently burdened with similar instructions) regard one another with shy smiles, after the fashion of two children who have been introduced by their nurses at a party.

Presently the sentry, by a happy inspiration, proffers his bayonet for inspection, as it were a new doll. Mucklewame bows solemnly, and fingers the blade. Then he produces his own bayonet, and the two weapons are compared—still in constrained silence. Then Mucklewame nods approvingly.

"Verra goody!" he remarks, profoundly convinced that he is speaking the French language.

"Olrigh! Tipperaree!" replies the sentry, not to be outdone in international courtesy.

Unfortunately, the further cementing of the Entente Cordiale is frustrated by the blast of a whistle. We hurl ourselves into our trucks; the R.T.O. waves his hand in benediction; and the regiment proceeds upon its way, packed like herrings, but "all jubilant with song."

III.

We have been "oot here" for a week now, and although we have had no personal encounter with the foe, our time has not been wasted. We are filling up gaps in our education, and we are tolerably busy. Some things, of course, we have not had to learn. We are fairly well inured, for instance, to hard work and irregular meals. What we have chiefly to acquire at present is the art of adaptability. When we are able to settle down into strange billets in half an hour, and pack up, ready for departure, within the same period, we shall have made a great stride in efficiency, and added enormously to our own personal comfort.

Even now we are making progress. Observe the platoon who are marching into this farmyard. They are dead tired, and the sight of the straw-filled barn is too much for some of them. They throw themselves down anywhere, and are asleep in a moment. When they wake up—or more likely, are wakened up—in an hour or two, they will be sorry. They will be stiff and sore, and their feet will be a torment. Others, more sensible, crowd round the pump, or dabble their abraded extremities in one of the countless ditches with which this country is intersected. Others again, of the more enterprising kind, repair to the house-door, and

inquire politely for "the wife." (They have long given up inquiring for "the master." There is no master on this farm, or indeed on any farm throughout the length and breadth of this great-hearted land. Father and sons are all away, restoring the Bosche to his proper place in the animal kingdom. We have seen no young or middle-aged man out of uniform since we entered this district, save an occasional imbecile or cripple.)

Presently "the wife" comes to the door, with a smile. She can afford to smile now, for not so long ago her guests were Uhlans. Then begins an elaborate pantomime. Private Tosh says "Bonjourr!" in husky tones — last week he would have said "Hey, Bella!" —and proceeds to wash his hands in invisible soap and water. As a reward for his ingenuity he receives a basin of water: sometimes the water is even warm. Meanwhile Private Cosh, the linguist of the platoon, proffers twopence, and says: "Doolay — ye unnerstand?" He gets a drink of milk, which is a far, far better thing than the appalling green-scum-covered water with which his less adaptable brethren are wont to refresh themselves from wayside ditches. Thomas Atkins, however mature, is quite incorrigible in this respect.

Yes, we are getting on. And when every man in the platoon, instead of merely some, can find a place to sleep, draw his blanket from the waggon, clean his rifle and himself, and get to his dinner within the half-hour already specified, we shall be able justly to call ourselves seasoned.

We have covered some distance this week, and we have learned one thing at least, and that is, not to be uppish about our sleeping quarters. We have slept in chateaux, convents, farm-houses, and under the open sky. The chateaux are usually empty. An aged retainer, the sole inhabitant, explains that M. le Comte is at Paris; M. Armand at Arras; and M. Guy in Alsace,—all doing their bit. M. Victor is in hospital, with Madame and Mademoiselle in constant attendance.

So we settle down in the chateaux, and unroll our sleeping-bags upon its dusty parquet. Occasionally we find a bed available. Then two officers take the mattress, upon the floor, and two more take what is left of the bed. French chateaux do not appear to differ much as a class. They are distinguished by great elegance of design, infinite variety in furniture, and entire absence of drains. The same rule applies to convents, except that there is no furniture.

Given fine weather, by far the most luxurious form of lodging is in the open air. Here one may slumber at ease, fanned by the wings of cockchafers and soothed by an unseen choir of frogs. There are drawbacks, of course. Mr Waddell one evening spread his ground-sheet and bedding

in the grassy meadow, beside a murmuring stream. It was an idyllic resting-place for a person of romantic or contemplative disposition. Unfortunately it is almost impossible nowadays to keep one's favourite haunts select. This was evidently the opinion of the large water-rat which Waddell found sitting upon his air-pillow when he returned from supper. Although French, the animal exhibited no disposition to fraternise; but withdrew in the most pointed fashion, taking an Abernethy biscuit with him.

Accommodation in farms is best described by the word "promiscuous." There are twelve officers and two hundred men billeted here. The farm is exactly the same as any other French farm. It consists of a hollow square of buildings — dwelling-house, barns, pigstyes, and stables— with a commodious manure-heap, occupying the whole yard except a narrow strip round the edge, in the middle, the happy hunting-ground of innumerable cocks and hens and an occasional pig. The men sleep in the barns. The senior officers sleep in a stone-floored boudoir of their own. The juniors sleep where they can, and experience little difficulty in accomplishing the feat. A hard day's marching and a truss of straw — these two combined form an irresistible inducement to slumber.

Only a few miles away big guns thunder until the building shakes. To-morrow a select party of officers is to pay a visit to the trenches. Thereafter our whole flock is to go, in its official capacity. The War is with us at last. Early this morning a Zeppelin rose into view on the skyline. Shell fire pursued it, and it sank again — rumour says in the British lines. Rumour is our only war correspondent at present. It is far easier to follow the course of events from home, where newspapers are more plentiful than here.

But the grim realities of war are coming home to us. Outside this farm stands a tall tree. Not many months ago a party of Uhlans arrived here, bringing with them a wounded British prisoner. They crucified him to that self-same tree, and stood round him till he died. He was a long time dying.

Some of us had not heard of Uhlans before. These have now noted the name, for future reference—and action.

XV.—IN THE TRENCHES—AN OFF-DAY.

This town is under constant shell fire. It goes on day after day: it has been going on for months. Sometimes a single shell comes: sometimes half a dozen. Sometimes whole batteries get to work. The effect is terrible. You who live at home in ease have no conception of what it is like to live in

a town which is under intermittent shell fire.

I say this advisedly. You have no conception whatsoever.

We get no rest. There is a distant boom, followed by a crash overhead. Cries are heard — the cries of women and children. They are running frantically — running to observe the explosion, and if possible pick up a piece of the shell as a souvenir. Sometimes there are not enough souvenirs to go round, and then the clamour increases.

We get no rest, I say—only frightfulness. British officers, walking peaceably along the pavement, are frequently hustled and knocked aside by these persons. Only the other day, a full colonel was compelled to turn up a side street, to avoid disturbing a ring of excited children who were dancing round a beautiful new hole in the ground in the middle of a narrow lane.

If you enter into a café or estaminet, a total stranger sidles to your table, and, having sat down beside you, produces from the recesses of his person a fragment of shrapnel. This he lays before you, and explains that if he had been standing at the spot where the shell burst, it would have killed him. You express polite regret, and pass on elsewhere, seeking peace and finding none. The whole thing is a public scandal.

Seriously, though, it is astonishing what contempt familiarity can breed, even in the case of high-explosive shells. This little town lies close behind the trenches. All day long the big guns boom. By night the rifles and machine-guns take up the tale. One is frequently aroused from slumber, especially towards dawn, by a perfect tornado of firing. The machine-guns make a noise like a giant tearing calico. Periodically, too, as already stated, we are subjected to an hour's intimidation in the shape of bombardment. Shrapnel bursts over our heads; shells explode in the streets, especially in open spaces, or where two important streets cross. (With modern artillery, you can shell a town quite methodically by map and compass.)

Brother Bosche's motto appears to be: "It is a fine morning. There is nothing in the trenches doing. We abundant ammunition have. Let us a little frightfulness into the town pump!" So he pumps.

But nobody seems to mind. Of course there is a casualty now and then. Occasionally a hole is blown in a road, or the side of a house is knocked in. Yet the general attitude of the population is one of rather interested expectancy. There is always the cellar to retire to if things get really serious. The gratings are sandbagged to that end. At other times — well, there is always the pleasing possibility of witnessing the sudden removal of your neighbour's landmark.

Officers breakfasting in their

billets look up from their porridge, and say—

"That's a DUD! *That's* a better one! Stick to it, Bill!"

It really is most discouraging, to a sensitive and conscientious Hun.

The same unconcern reigns in the trenches. Let us imagine that we are members of a distinguished party from Headquarters, about to make a tour of inspection.

We leave the town, and after a short walk along the inevitable poplar-lined road turn into a field. The country all round us is flat—flat as Cheshire; and, like Cheshire, has a pond in every field. But in the hazy distance stands a low ridge.

"Better keep close to the hedge," suggests the officer in charge. "There are eighty guns on that ridge. It's a misty morning; but they've got all the ranges about here to a yard; so they *might*——"

We keep close to the hedge.

Presently we find ourselves entering upon a wide but sticky path cut in the clay. At the entrance stands a neat notice-board, which announces, somewhat unexpectedly:—

OLD KENT ROAD.

The field is flat, but the path runs downhill. Consequently we soon find ourselves tramping along below the ground level, with a stout parapet of clay on either side of us. Overhead there is nothing—nothing but the blue sky, with the larks singing, quite regardless of the War.

"Communication trench," explains the guide.

We tramp along this sunken lane for the best part of a mile. It winds a good deal. Every hundred yards or so comes a great promontory of sandbags, necessitating four right-angle turns. Once we pass under the shadow of trees, and apple-blossom flutters down upon our upturned faces. We are walking through an orchard. Despite the efforts of ten million armed men, brown old Mother Earth has made it plain that seed-time and harvest shall still prevail.

Now we are crossing a stream, which cuts the trench at right angles. The stream is spanned by a structure of planks—labelled, it is hardly necessary to say, LONDON BRIDGE. The side-street, so to speak, by which the stream runs away, is called JOCK'S JOY. We ask why?

"It's the place where the Highlanders wash their knees," is the explanation.

Presently we arrive at PICCADILLY CIRCUS, a muddy excavation in the earth, from which several passages branch. These thoroughfares are not all labelled with strict regard for London geography. We note THE HAYMARKET, also PICCADILLY; but ARTILLERY LANE seems out of place, somehow. On the site, too, of the Criterion, we observe a subterranean cavern containing three recumbent figures, snoring

lustily. This bears the sign CYCLISTS' REST.

We, however, take the turning marked SHAFTESBURY AVENUE, and after passing (quite wrongly, don't you think?) through TRAFALGAR SQUARE—six feet by eight—find ourselves in the actual firing trench.

It is an unexpectedly spacious place. We, who have spent the winter constructing slits in the ground two feet wide, feel quite lost in this roomy thoroughfare. For a thoroughfare it is, with little toy houses on either side. They are hewn out of the solid earth, lined with planks, painted, furnished, and decorated. These are, so to speak, permanent trenches, which have been occupied for more than six months.

Observe this eligible residence on your left. It has a little door, nearly six feet high, and a real glass window, with a little curtain. Inside, there is a bunk, six feet long, together with an ingenious folding washhand-stand, of the nautical variety, and a flap-table. The walls, which are painted pale green, are decorated with elegant extracts from the *The Sketch* and *La Vie Parisienne*. Outside, the name of the villa is painted up. It is in Welsh — that notorious railway station in Anglesey which runs to thirty-three syllables or so—and extends from one end of the facade to the other.

"This is my shanty," explains a machine-gun officer standing by. "It was built by a Welsh Fusilier, who has since moved on. He was here all winter, and made everything himself, including the washhand-stand. Some carpenter—what? of course I am not here continuously. We have six days in the trenches and six out; so I play Cox and Box with a man in the Midland Mud-crushers, who take turns with us. Come in and have some tea."

It is only ten o'clock in the morning, but tea—strong and sweet, with condensed milk—is instantly forthcoming. Refreshed by this, and a slice of cake, we proceed upon our excursion.

The trench is full of men, mostly asleep; for the night cometh, when no man may sleep. They lie in low-roofed rectangular caves, like the interior of great cucumber-frames, lined with planks and supported by props. The cave is really a homogeneous affair, for it is constructed in the R.E. workshops and then brought bodily to the trenches and fitted into its appointed excavation. Each cave holds three men. They lie side by side, like three dogs in a triple kennel, with their heads outward and easily accessible to the individual who performs the functions of "knocker-up."

Others are cooking, others are cleaning their rifles. The proceedings are superintended by a contemplative tabby cat, coiled up in a niche, like a feline flower in a crannied wall.

"She used ter sit on top of the parapet," explains a friendly lance-corporal; "but became a casualty, owin' to a sniper mistakin' 'er for a Guardsman's bearskin. Show the officer your back, Christabel!"

We inspect the healed scar, and pass on. Next moment we round a traverse — and walk straight into the arms of Privates Ogg and Hogg!

No need now to remain with the distinguished party from Headquarters. For the next half-mile of trench you will find yourselves among friends. "K(i)" and Brother Bosche are face to face at last, and here you behold our own particular band of warriors taking their first spell in the trenches.

Let us open the door of this spacious dug-out—the image of an up-river bungalow, decorated with window-boxes and labelled POTSDAM VIEW—and join the party of four which sits round the table.

"How did your fellows get on last night, Wagstaffe?" inquires Major Kemp.

"Very well, on the whole. It was a really happy thought on the part of the authorities—almost human, in fact—to put us in alongside the Old Regiment."

"Or what's left of them."

Wagstaffe nods gravely.

"Yes. There are some changes in the Mess since I last dined there," he says. "Anyhow, the old hands took our boys to their bosoms at once, and showed them the ropes."

"The men did not altogether fancy look-out work in the dark, sir," says Bobby Little to Major Kemp.

"Neither should I, very much," said Kemp. "To take one's stand on a ledge fixed at a height which brings one's head and shoulders well above the parapet, and stand there for an hour on end, knowing that a machine-gun may start a spill of rapid traversing fire at any moment—well, it takes a bit of doing, you know, until you are used to it. How did you persuade 'em, Bobby?"

"Oh, I just climbed up on the top of the parapet and sat there for a bit," says Bobby Little modestly. "They were all right after that."

"Had you any excitement, Ayling?" asks Kemp. "I hear rumours that you had two casualties."

"Yes," says Ayling. "Four of us went out patrolling in front of the trench——"

"Who?"

"Myself, two men, and old Sergeant Carfrae."

"Carfrae?" Wagstaffe laughs. "That old fire-eater? I remember him at Paardeberg. You were lucky to get back alive. Proceed, my son!"

"We went out," continues Ayling, "and patrolled."

"How?"

"Well, there you rather have me. I have always been a bit foggy as to what a patrol really does — what risks it takes, and so on. However, Carfrae had no doubts on the subject whatever. His idea was to trot over to the

German trenches and look inside."

"Quite so!" agreed Wagstaffe, and Kemp chuckled.

"Well, we were standing by the barbed wire entanglement, arguing the point, when suddenly some infernal imbecile in our own trenches——"

"Cockerell, for a dollar!" murmurs Wagstaffe. "Don't say he fired at you!"

"No, he did worse. He let off a fire-ball."

"Whew! And there you stood in the limelight?"

"Exactly."

"What did you do?"

"I had sufficient presence of mind to do what Carfrae did. I threw myself on my face, and shouted to the two men to do the same."

"Did they?"

"No. They started to run back towards the trenches. Half a dozen German rifles opened on them at once."

"Were they badly hit?"

"Nothing to speak of, considering. The shots mostly went high. Preston got his elbow smashed, and Burke had a bullet through his cap and another in the region of the waistband. Then they tumbled into the trench like rabbits. Carfrae and I crawled after them."

At this moment the doorway of the dug-out is darkened by a massive figure, and Major Kemp's colour-sergeant announces—

"There's a parrty of Gairmans gotten oot o' their trenches, sirr. Will we open fire?"

"Go and have a look at 'em, like a good chap, Wagger," says the Major. "I want to finish this letter."

Wagstaffe and Bobby Little make their way along the trench until they come to a low opening marked MAXIM VILLA. They crawl inside, and find themselves in a semi-circular recess, chiefly occupied by an earthen platform, upon which a machine-gun is mounted. The recess is roofed over, heavily protected with sandbags, and lined with iron plates; for a machine-gun emplacement is the object of frequent and pressing attention from high-explosive shells. There are loopholes to right and left, but not in front. These deadly weapons prefer diagonal or enfilade fire. It is not worth while to fire them frontally.

Wagstaffe draws back a strip of sacking which covers one loophole, and peers out. There, a hundred and fifty yards away, across a sunlit field, he beholds some twenty grey figures, engaged in the most pastoral of pursuits, in front of the German trenches.

"They are cutting the grass," he says. "Let 'em, by all means! If they don't, we must. We don't want their bomb-throwers crawling over here through a hay-field. Let us encourage them by every means in our power. It might almost be worth our while to send them a message. Walk along the trench, Bobby, and see that no excitable person looses off at them."

Bobby obeys; and peace still broods over the sleepy trench. The only sound which breaks the summer stillness is the everlasting crack, crack! of the snipers' rifles. On an off-day like this the sniper is a very necessary person. He serves to remind us that we are at war. Concealed in his own particular eyrie, with his eye for ever laid along his telescopic sights, he keeps ceaseless vigil over the ragged outline of the enemy's trenches. Wherever a head, or anything resembling a head, shows itself, he fires. Were it not for his enthusiasm, both sides would be sitting in their shirt-sleeves upon their respective parapets, regarding one another with frank curiosity; and that would never do. So the day wears on.

Suddenly, from far in our rear, comes a boom, then another. Wagstaffe sighs resignedly.

"Why can't they let well alone?" he complains. "What's the trouble now?"

"I expect it's our Divisional Artillery having a little target practice," says Captain Blaikie. He peers into a neighbouring trench-periscope. "Yes, they are shelling that farm behind the German second-line trench. Making good shooting, too, for beginners," as a column of dust and smoke rises from behind the enemy's lines. "But brother Bosche will be very peevish about it. We don't usually fire at this time of the afternoon. Yes, there is the haymaking party going home. There will be a beastly noise for the next half-hour. Pass the word along for every man to get into his dug-out."

The warning comes none too soon. In five minutes the incensed Hun is retaliating for the disturbance of his afternoon siesta. A hail of bullets passes over our trench. Shrapnel bursts overhead. High-explosive shells rain upon and around the parapet. One drops into the trench, and explodes, with surprisingly little effect. (Bobby Little found the head afterwards, and sent it home as a memento of his first encounter with reality.)

Our trench makes no reply. There is no need. This outburst heralds no grand assault. It is a mere display of "frightfulness," calculated to cow the impressionable Briton. We sit close, and make tea. Only the look-out men, crouching behind their periscopes and loopholes, keep their posts. The wind is the wrong way for gas, and in any case we all have respirators. Private M'Leary, the humourist of "A" Company, puts his on, and pretends to drink his tea through it.

Altogether, the British soldier appears sadly unappreciative either of "frightfulness" or practical chemistry. He is a hopeless case.

The firing ceases as suddenly as it began. Silence reigns again, broken only by a solitary shot from a trench-mortar—a sort of explosive postscript to a half-hour's Hymn of Hate.

"And that's that!" observes Captain Blaikie cheerfully, emerging from Potsdam View.

"The Hun is a harmless little creature, but noisy when roused. Now, what about getting home? It will be dark in half an hour or so. Platoon commanders, warn your men!"

It should be noted that upon this occasion we are not doing our full spell of duty—that is, six days. We have merely come in for a spell of instruction, of twenty-four hours' duration, under the chaperonage of our elder and more seasoned brethren.

Bobby Little, having given the necessary orders to his sergeant, proceeded to Trafalgar Square, there to await the mustering of his platoon.

But the first arrival took the form of a slow-moving procession—a corporal, followed by two men carrying a stretcher. On the stretcher lay something covered with a ground-sheet. At one end projected a pair of regulation boots, very still and rigid.

Bobby caught his breath. He was just nineteen, and this was his first encounter with sudden death.

"Who is it?" he asked unsteadily.

The corporal saluted.

"Private M'Leary, sirr. That last shot from the trench-mortar got him. It came in kin' o' sideways. He was sittin' at the end of his dug-oot, gettin' his tea. Stretcher party, advance!"

The procession moved off again, and disappeared round the curve of Shaftesbury Avenue. The off-day was over.

(*To be continued.*)

CONSTANTINOPLE AND THE BOSPHORUS.

BY W. J. C.

It is an easy surmise that in years to come the present operations against Constantinople will be a favourite subject with historians and other writers. They will overlook nothing in the telling, and find nothing to be desired in the matter of public attention. For in colour, romance, and glamour, almost everything that makes the literature of War attractive, it has no equal among the campaigns of the Great War, and scarcely in any before. And for two British Dominions at least, it will always have the absorbing interest that belongs to the earliest important war of a young nation. It may even become their Siege of Troy.

One feels that the latest chapter of Constantinople's wonderful history is altogether worthy of its setting, — and that the long story, a pageant of tragedy diversified by the unexpected and picturesque, is holding to its past character and even rising in interest as it proceeds. Those 8000 British soldiers of the Crimea who sleep among the trees and flowers of the sweet English cemetery at Scutari, with the waves of Marmora splashing softly below, may almost turn in their graves at the unexpected sound of British guns fired against the Turk. And for the picturesque glance at the armies moving on the city— Constantinople, itself familiar with strange sights throughout its history, has never seen one more varied and impressive than the British force alone. Naval battalions bearing the names of Northern admirals. Battalions of British regular infantry representing historic English, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh regiments, in a proportion fair to their respective countries—no mere accident one supposes, with "Constantinople" as a possible battle-honour to be won. Indian troops from the Himalayas and the plains. British Territorials—before the War never dreaming of this service within a year; Constantinople never of seeing them, whoever might eventually come. And exciting most wonderment of all, Australian and New Zealand troops—not in small representative contingents, but in numbers an army by themselves, making their first entry into European war, and with it a great reputation. Greek imagination, one hears, has already taken to attributing every battle and every success to the "Australian Army."

"Australie! Australie! Where is that?" the writer once heard a Turkish landowner ask in bewilderment. His doctor son, fresh from the Medical School at Constantinople, hastened to describe it as being "under the world," and the old man appeared satisfied that his own

knowledge of geography was not unduly limited after all. Rumour is likely to have filled him since with remarkable stories about "Australie" and the men from "under the world." This, however, by the way.

Darius and his Persian host captured and burnt Constantinople some two thousand four hundred years ago. Xerxes with two million men passed through it later, when it had been rebuilt. Afterwards the Ten Thousand, lately come from great adventures, proposed to sack it as a city well worth sacking. And then, after an interval of five centuries, it was destroyed by the Romans. It was captured by the Fourth Crusade in the year 1203, perhaps the strangest story of all in the city's romantic history. One hardly to be regretted, historians with Greek sympathies notwithstanding. And next, in 1453, it fell to Mahomet the Conqueror. It is in the company of many old historical events like these that the doings of the British Expeditionary Army will be chronicled.

There are four ways by which the visitor may enter Constantinople. He may come by rail either from Europe or Asia Minor, or by steamer from the Black Sea or the Mediterranean. Entry by railway is altogether unworthy of the city. Better is the approach from the Mediterranean across the Sea of Marmora, a route much extolled, though really only second best, and a bad second at that. Arriving by this way the eye dwells too much on the long seaward slope of Stamboul covered with shabby buildings from water to ridge. The skyline is broken by minarets, and Sta Sophia and other famous buildings are in view; but these sights are expected, and on the whole there is a sense of disappointment.

But come down from the Black Sea and you reach the Golden Horn as a fitting climax after passing the whole seventeen miles of the Bosphorus. Best of all is to arrive by early morning, preferably a morning in May. There is no hint of beauty to come as your steamer turns in through the Bosphorus headlands. The coast is dark and rugged, the hills bare except for interminable oak scrub; you can see it is a region of hard winters and severe storms. But appearances change as you proceed. After passing the heavy guns at Anadoli Kavak and Roumeli Kavak—scores upon scores of them; at the water's edge, on the hillsides, on the hill-tops—the famous waterway begins to justify its reputation. Narrow valleys rise from little bays, each bay with its village along the shore. The slopes of the hills are steep, and ascend from a fringe of rock at the waterside, never from sand or mud. You pass the Giants' Mountain, highest of Bosphorus hills; Beicos Bay, where the straits open to their greatest width of nearly three miles; and Therapia, where ambassadors live during the summer, its white hotels and houses in

a wealth of gardens and trees. The villages become more thickly set as you go; the hillsides are wooded with pine and ilex; there are groups of cypress; sometimes the brighter green of plane and fig; and sometimes the pink blossom of judas-trees. Each village seems to have its pleasant, open Place, generally beside the landing-stage, where in the shadow of plane-trees and trellised vines folk are sitting at tables. On the valley sides are glimpses of strawberry fields and vineyards, of houses among orchards and gardens.

Through scenes like these the Bosphorus winds. Past Canlija, where on a ridge the white towers of the deposed Khedive's summer palace show above woods. Past Roumeli Hissar and Anadoli Hissar, each with its picturesque castle; and then round the high rocky headland of Candilli, terraced with houses and gardens, pleasantest suburb of the Constantinople English. Between Roumeli Hissar in Europe and Candilli in Asia the Bosphorus is contracted to its least width. It ceases to look like a string of lakes or an arm of the sea. Here you get the true idea of what it really is—nothing other than a tideless, rapid-flowing river of salt water, without fellow in the world save its own continuation in the Dardanelles. It is the Danube, Dniester, Dnieper, Don, Kizil Irmak, and all the other streams of the Euxine basin brought together into one noble gorge, after depositing their sediment in the deep lake of the Black Sea and receiving its salt in return. Water passes Candilli that fell as rain or snow in the Black Forest of Germany, in the Tyrol, the Carpathians, and the Caucasus.

Because the channel is narrow, depth and speed of current have to make up for the deficieney. The Bosphorus sweeps round Candilli Point only eight hundred yards in width; but it is four hundred feet deep, and runs at five miles an hour. It is clear as an ocean, and its colour is always indigo blue except in time of heavy rain. Then along each shore is a sharply-defined edge of yellow water.

For the next seven miles to the Golden Horn the waterside is lined continuously with houses. These, or some of them, are the famous Bosphorus palaces, each with its low, arched tunnel from the water, by which the caiques pass in and out (and bodies in sacks, in earlier days); each, too, with its pleasant kiosk, or summer-house, on the wooded hillside behind.

Constantinople comes into sight soon after Candilli is passed. You first see Seraglio Point with its cypresses and huddle of old buildings, topped by the dome and minarets of Sta Sophia. As introductory view of the city nothing could be more appropriate and suggestive. It is the site of ancient Byzantium; on the left the Bosphorus goes out into the Sea of Marmora past the Tower of Leander on its sunken rock; on the right opens the Golden Horn. And as you pass

into the narrow harbour, Stamboul rising boldly on one side, Galata and Pera still more boldly on the other, with the floating bridge of Galata crossing the five hundred yards of water between, you have no feeling of disappointment. Rather you feel that expectation is exceeded. Instead of shabbiness and decay, only the picturesque and romantic appear. Under the hot white sunlight you discover an Eastern city lying on one side of the harbour, a Southern European on the other. Even the subtle, pervading smell—unlike anything you have found before—is neither East nor West nor Southern, but seems to be a blend of all with a trace of antiquity thrown in. And now you have no difficulty in believing that around you lie the scenes of more tragedies; more unexpected turns of good fortune and ill; more massacres, assassinations, and cruelties, than are to be found in any similar area elsewhere. The glamour of the most interesting city in the world is, in fact, upon you, never to be displaced.

The situation of Constantinople has been so often described that it must be familiar to all readers. They know that the city stands upon an irregular tongue of land, with the Sea of Marmora on one side, and the Golden Horn, five miles long, upon the other. They know, too, that the ancient walls still extend from water to water across the base of the tongue; that Galata and Pera are across the Golden Horn; and that, a mile away, on the other side of the Bosphorus, are Scutari and other suburbs. But not so many realise the great area covered by the ancient city. It then extended, as it does now, far beyond the walls, yet the space inside them is more than four miles each way, and covers about seven square miles. Within this space remain unspoilt more ancient and medieval structures, monuments, and buildings than any other city can show. And they are rich with association of every kind, from martyrdom to intrigue, from battle to murder. To know Old Constantinople thoroughly, to be able to connect scene with event and reconstitute the past, is a lifetime's work. Dealing with the walls alone there is a large literature. There are two classes of walls—the land walls, still intact, across the peninsula from water to water; and the sea walls, in part destroyed, which completely encircled the city along the water fronts. Walk along the land walls, consider what they saw, how they shaped not only the city's history but the history of Christendom, as one might say, and you understand why they make so great a subject. They are four miles long. A deep dry moat may still be traced in front. There are walls behind walls, forty, fifty, sixty feet high, of massive masonry. There are towers by the dozen. There are gateways steeped in history—the Golden Gate, the Adrianople Gate, the Belgrade Gate, and others,—the names themselves sound of imperial pomp and conquest and romance.

These walls, twelve and fifteen centuries old, have seen many sieges, but none so strange and romantic as that by the Fourth Crusade. The Fates seemed leagued to prevent the Crusade following the purpose on which it had set out. It found itself diverted first to the siege of Zara in aid of the Venetians. From Zara it was further diverted, again with the Venetians, to join in the internal troubles of Constantinople, and undertake the capture of that city, then Christian, and first in the world in wealth, population, and strength of fortifications. There were good intentions at the back of the scheme; and there were also good opportunities for acquiring wealth. It was in every way an adventure of the first order. The French Crusaders, outnumbered ten to one, were besiegers, yet could attack only a small section of the land walls. Sometimes they were themselves besieged. They were short of supplies, and had to work against time. Curious it is to read that in the first assault, having gained the top of the wall, they were opposed by "Englishmen and Danes" armed with battle-axes, "who cast them out in very ugly sort," and took some prisoners.

During the second assault the Venetians who attacked the sea walls captured twenty-five towers along the Golden Horn. Thereupon Dandolo, the blind Doge, sent a messenger by boat to tell the French, who were fighting before the land walls, what had been done. "And know forsooth," his encouraging message added, "that such towers cannot be retaken." One can see the Italian boatmen rowing with the news; can imagine, too, the French so overjoyed "that they cannot believe their ears" and remain doubting. But to give ocular proof of his success Dandolo presently sent, also by boat, "horses and palfreys" his men had taken. It was a picturesque boat-load in the circumstances.

When the city opened its gates to the Crusaders, having first deposed the usurping emperor, their troubles were not yet over. They were a match for any number of Greeks in battle, but no match in cunning. After having been admitted, the Crusaders were invited to withdraw to Galata, on the score of avoiding offence to the population. Having got them again outside the walls, the restored Greek emperor showed no readiness to pay for the great services rendered by the others. He had to be reminded in set terms of his liabilities: 200,000 marks of silver, a year's food for the Crusaders' host, a contingent of troops for the Holy Land, and so on. In the end there was no paying; instead, the Greeks endeavoured to fire the Crusaders' fleet, and the siege had to be undertaken again. This time the city was captured, and there was great slaughter. And the chronicler records as well that "never since the world was created had so much booty been won in any city." The Fourth Crusade never reached Syria, in spite of all its longings and striv-

ings to do so. It founded instead the short-lived Latin Empire in Constantinople.

One other memorable siege the walls saw 250 years later, when they were attacked by Mahomet II. and a Turkish army of 150,000 men. For the first time mighty cannon—for which the Turks have always displayed a liking — were brought against the ancient defences. These did not altogether fail even then. The great guns were few, their fire slow, and there was time to improvise defences behind the breaches they made. Besides, the line of fortification was not only of masonry, but included a great embankment of earth filled in between the inner and outer walls; and the siege made little progress. Nor could Mahomet get his fleet past the chain across the Golden Horn. Possession of the harbour became vital to his success, so he made the famous transfer of his fleet from the Bosphorus across the high land of Pera. The exact route that was followed is still debated. Wherever it lay, however, he had to haul his ships — seventy of them — up the steep face of a hill 300 feet high, and cover at least two miles of land before launching on the Golden Horn. After secretly preparing a cutting provided with greased ways in the bottom, the transfer was made in a single night. To the Greeks a miracle seemed to have happened. The real soul of the defence was Giustiniani, a Genoese, who commanded 2000 of his countrymen. The same day that he fell mortally wounded the last Emperor of Constantinople perished in a breach of the great wall, and the Turks entered. It was the 29th of May 1453,—with a little good fortune the present allied armies might have made it a double anniversary.

The old structures, monuments, and buildings in Constantinople are so varied and numerous that only the serious student of them can hope to do more than acquire a general knowledge. And even he will find himself inclined to specialise more in one subject than another. He finds an almost inexhaustible field in Sta Sophia and the various ancient churches. He may spend much time in examining the great cisterns of the city—if he can get into them. Not mere tanks or reservoirs these, but huge underground buildings; one at least some 350 feet long, nearly 200 wide, with a vaulted roof supported by 330 marble columns each 40 feet high. Then there are the palaces, of which, indeed, little can now be seen — the reason perhaps why they form a subject of endless controversy. He may linger about the ancient ports on the Marmora front. Only ruined moles are visible, used now by charcoal and firewood vessels from the Gulf of Ismid, but once they witnessed the goings and comings of emperors.

Of greater interest are the monumental columns scattered about the city. To one of these attaches a strange story. After the second capture of Constantinople by the Cru-

saders, the last usurper who had given them trouble fell into their hands, and to make his punishment a memorable one they flung him from the summit of a column. It was a singular end for an emperor, but more lay behind. Sculptured on its surface the column displayed the figure of a falling emperor; and ancient tradition said that in this manner an emperor of Constantinople should die.

The Serpent Column that rises from the bottom of a circular pit in the Hippodrome has been called the most wonderful monument in Constantinople. In appearance it is not much, but consider its age, origin, and history, and you become of the same opinion. It was erected at Delphi 2400 years ago to commemorate the victory of Platea. From Delphi it was brought as a trophy to Constantinople, and has stood in the Hippodrome for 1600 years. It is of bronze, perhaps thirty feet high in all, three entwined serpents, standing on their tails. Their heads have gone—one struck off with a battle-axe by Mahomet the Conqueror when he entered the city—but one is preserved in the Imperial Museum. The column shows holes that were pierced by grape-shot at the time the Jannissaries were massacred around it. No monument, surely, has ever looked upon so much as this! One rival in interest perhaps it may have—the Sarcophagus of Alexander the Great, and that is in the Museum.

Besides all these, and many other remains that have come down from the early days of the city, there is a later Constantinople that also has the interest of age. You may ramble in Phanar, the Greek quarter, and see houses built long before the Turkish conquest. In some, it is said, still linger families of unbroken descent from the time of the Greek Empire — Phanariote Greeks they are called. You may explore mosque-courts and mosques, largest and finest ever built by Moslems, and now of an age that would be called old in England. Or you may turn to street fountains, generally the gift of long-gone pious Moslems, and find them of peculiar interest; for many are exceedingly beautiful with their marble and tiles, their canopies and carving.

Then there is Galata, the district of outlanders from earliest times. Here were the Italian trading colonies of Genoese, Venetians, Pisans, who ever found business in Constantinople. Genoese built the great circular tower of Galata, still the finest in Constantinople. It was the safe place of the colony, and one suspects that its height of nearly 200 feet and lofty situation were to give a view of Marmora and the shipping over the ridge of Stamboul. Under the trellised vines round its base one can picture Italian trading adventurers telling and hearing strange news over their wine.

From their entrenched stronghold in Galata, that extended from the water to the hill-top of Pera, hot-blooded Genoese sometimes

defied the Byzantine power, even waged war against it. As an incident of peace, illustrating the colony's attitude to the State that gave it hospitality, consider this small incident. A great stone unaccountably fell in Constantinople one morning, to the alarm and surprise of the citizens. It was followed by a second the next day. They were shot, thrown as defiant notification that the Genoese had just possessed themselves of a monster new gun, in those earliest days of artillery a weapon of such incredible size and power that it could carry the short mile from Pera hill to Constantinople. It was the first bombardment the city had ever known, and led indirectly to war.

The Tower of Galata provides not only the widest but the best view of Constantinople to be had anywhere. Most of the Golden Horn and its shipping are in sight. There are glimpses, too, of the Upper Bosphorus as a chain of lakes. Beyond the Golden Horn is an uninterrupted view of Scutari. Even the white houses on Proti and other green islands of the Princes Archipelago in Marmora show separately; and due south across the sea is the snow of that "Mysian Olympus" that Kinglake discovered with pleasure and surprise from a hill in Pera.

Perhaps the greatest charm of Constantinople is that at heart it is still a medieval Eastern city. There is an outward show of modernity—motor-cars, telephones, cinema theatres, Paris fashions, and nowhere do you see such extravagances of dress as among the Greek women of Pera—but in a short distance you may pass into Asiatic life and scenes of four hundred years ago.

Turn into the dark Spice Bazaar of Stamboul, an ancient, vaulted, tunnel-like building, with small shops on either side. The air is heavy with strange odours, spices known and unknown. Although in the thronging crowd are soldiers in khaki and men in European dress, they are lost in the general effect, and you know you are in the old East. Or go to the Grand Bazaar, well known to tourists. In its miles of vaulted and columned passages, tied with iron rods against earthquakes and lined with stalls, you may easily lose yourself. There even more than in the Spice Bazaar the crowd is a mixture of East and West; but it is the East that the eye sees. The wares of the Grand Bazaar have lost their old character, and are now largely the oriental imitations of Germany, Paris, and Vienna; but there are still many shops where, in the true atmosphere of Aleppo and Damascus, you may linger and drink coffee, and buy rare fabrics and articles brought from all the East between the Mediterranean and India.

In the streets also, there is no end to strange and picturesque scenes to be found nowhere else in Europe. You may come upon a wandering dervish with his bowl and battle-axe; see a pilgrimage

set out for Mecca; or a Turkish lady arrested by the police for visiting the shop of a Christian. And from time to time you hear the curious warning cry, at which the crowd always opens. Then eight, twelve, perhaps sixteen sweating men amble by in step. From their shoulders is slung by an ingenious arrangement of poles and ropes some object,—from an old bronze cannon to a gigantic cask, or a bank safe. These men are *hamals* or porters, whose guild is the most powerful and jealously guarded in Constantinople. You may carry your own bag in the streets, but hand it to another, even your servant, and the *hamals* will come down on him at once.

From its earliest days Constantinople has been a city notable for its fires. They have got into history in a way no other fires than the fire of London and burning of Moscow have done. They seem always to have had a character different to other fires. One may hold that they indicate the inflammable nature of buildings permitted in the city; but they also have a close relationship with political trouble, and the tradition of the connection probably is an old one. From the configuration of the land they also acquire a spectacular quality not to be found in other cities. Any one who has seen from Pera a great fire in Stamboul, has a more impressive notion of what a great fire is like, than if, from a safe distance, he watched a fire much greater in London. With acres of buildings alight in Stamboul by night you have a hillside view across a valley. There is a roaring furnace; flame going up 200 feet along a wide front; smoke like thunder-clouds; and against the glow and fury immense mosques and minarets stand silhouetted, black against flame, or white against black, according to the position.

The number of houses consumed is the popular measure of a fire. You hear of 500 having gone; of 2000, of 5000. Fifty houses seem no fire at all in such company. With all this tradition of fires it might be thought that Constantinople would know by this time how to deal with them. In the way of letting every one know that a fire is in progress there is certainly expertness. For soon after one breaks out at night, even in far-off suburbs, the *behkjis* or watchmen in every street are pounding their iron-shod staves on the pavement, and shouting the quarter with voices like town-criers. But in the way of putting out or localising fires, all that has been achieved is the picturesque and pathetic. There are numerous local volunteer fire brigades, men who, for a daily free ration of bread, hold themselves liable to attend fires with their implements. To see these local fire brigades coming at night to a big fire is a spectacle almost better than any other in Constantinople. They come from miles round, and along a main thoroughfare make almost a procession. They come running

barefooted, wearing no more than a thin vest and short drawers like cross-country runners. In front runs a torch-bearer or lantern-bearer; behind him a man with the brass nozzle of a squirt; and then the little force-pump standing on two long poles shouldered by eight men, with relay bearers alongside. Others run in the rear who take their turn when needed. The pace is a hard run, even in the obscurity of dark roads. But when a main street, lined by crowds, is reached, the effect upon the firemen is electrical. The real allurement that makes them volunteer firemen is not the bread ration but the lime-light. Entering the narrow lane left for them by onlookers they break into a frenzy like dervishes. The speed becomes headlong—as if for their lives. The torch-bearer shouts and leaps; the nozzle-bearer too. You get the idea that the little polished pump flashing in the light is a god, and the panting, wild-eyed, leaping company his priests and votaries in ecstasy. But they have not yet done their chief feat—that comes where the crowd is thickest. A cry is uttered by one of the runners behind, and pump and poles are given a sudden toss into the air; the eight bearers side-step outwards in their stride, and eight relay bearers dash in and receive the falling apparatus on their shoulders at the right moment. In execution it is an acrobatic feat, done without slackening of speed.

As another aspect of Constantinople fires, glance at the scenes that accompanied the burning of a district near to Sta Sophia. It was an afternoon fire, and its distant view was not so luridly spectacular as would have been by night; its scenes at close quarters, however, were wanting in no particular. The ancient Hippodrome, which had seen games, processions, tumults of Blue and Green, executions, massacres of Jannissaries and others, fires, too, on the grandest scale, now saw its wide area the refuge of thousands who had fled from the flames. The Egyptian Obelisk, Serpent Column, and Colossus rose above a tumble of household goods, as if the effects of a town had been thrown promiscuously into the open space about them. On a nearer view the goods resolved themselves into hundreds of separate heaps, by each of which sat frightened women and children. The great courtyard of the mosque of Ahmed adjoining the Hippodrome was similarly crowded with banks of furniture piled even higher than its railings. The balconies of the lofty minarets from which the muezzin is cried were crowded with priests. Most of the burning buildings were wooden, and the showers of sparks and rolling banks of smoke sometimes hid these priests in their high eyrie. At the southern end of the Hippodrome houses were already on fire, and so a Government building next to them was being drenched by hand squirts and pumps. Yet ranged along one edge of the Hippodrome, like waiting cabs, stood all

the steam fire-engines of Constantinople, as one thought. Their funnels were smoking, the crews beside them were doing nothing; you wondered what could have happened. The Water Company, it appeared, had a quarrel with the City Authorities—there were long-standing unpaid charges for water taken for previous fires—so for this fire the supply had been cut off. You heard that some engines were pumping from the sea. But the area of fire was so great that obviously they could deal with only a corner of it. Meanwhile, as something had to be done, in the absence of anything better professional firemen in red helmets were tearing down burning houses with long hooks. It looked like nothing so much as pulling a bonfire together for better burning.

One of the most pleasant spots in Constantinople, one also where you may see a curiously representative section of the people, is the Place of Sta Sophia. It is that long, wide, open space on the south-west side of the church, bordered with rows of chestnut-trees. In old days it was the centre of the imperial city. On the one side, as now, was Sta Sophia; on the opposite side the Royal Palace; at one end the Senate-house; and at the other the structure from which all distances in the empire were measured. Along the boundary of the old palace grounds is now a row of cafés, with the chestnut-trees before them, making a cool, shaded space filled with seats and tables. On hot Sunday mornings there is no more interesting resort than this in all Constantinople.

It is essentially a native haunt. You may sit here day after day; and though Europeans pass to and from Sta Sophia and the Hippodrome, they are not attracted by these native cafés. But this is the spot to linger in if you would see the varied inhabitants of the city. The non-Moslem peoples of Constantinople do not generally take their ease and pleasure in Stamboul. That is the Moslem city, with an unwelcoming eye for Christians; so the others go to the pleasant waterside cafés along the Bosphorus, or to the islands, or to the cafés of Galata and Pera. But for some reason this Place of Sta Sophia draws Moslem and Christian alike. On a hot day in May or June there will be no vacant seat unless you come quite early.

The whole great space looks like a bed of scarlet geraniums when the tables are filled with their red-fezzed customers. These sit so closely that neighbours are touching, and the perspiring waiters have difficulty in moving about. Here you see well the democratic spirit that marks Turks of all classes. At one table sit a group of army officers, one of them of high rank, by his fez; and at the next, rough khaki jostling fine khaki and gold lace, three private soldiers with a naval seaman in blue-and-white. Yet neither group is conscious of the slightest awkwardness. Conversation goes on; they can overhear each other; but each party might be unaware of the

other's presence for any difference that it makes. At a table beside you are mullahs in blue gowns; one of whom, sitting with his chair tilted back against a tree, sees that you are writing. In a low tone he evidently calls the attention of a friend, who looks round civilly and without staring. Presently you catch the word "Ingleez," followed after a little time by "dost"; and now, with a glance or two, can fill in the gist of the remarks that have been made. You have been recognised for English; spoken of as a friend; and therefore one who would not write ill of the country. Afterwards on reaching for a match one of the mullahs courteously anticipates your want.

It interests you perhaps to count how many races are to be seen and recognised without trouble. Turks, Kurds, Circassians, and Persians you find offhand; but there are also Egyptians, three of them, with the insolent look most Egyptians in Constantinople wear. Plotters these, surely—it is just the place in which you would expect to see them basking. There are also Croats from Bosnia and Herzegovina, in white leggings, dark-blue breeches, and scarlet tunic heavy with gold embroidery. There are Albanians, Arabs, and negro eunuchs. All these are Moslems; most of them officers, soldiers, sailors, government officials, mullahs, and door-keepers, and wear either a uniform or distinctive dress. They make the crowd brilliant with gorgeous colours and gold embroidery.

The Christians are more sober in garb, though as varied in race. Armenians and Greeks are the most numerous. Merchants, bankers, clerks, doctors, money-changers—one of whom you remember to have seen in his little den at the street's edge in Pera playing always with a pile of silver medjidies upon his glass counter. There are Syrians, too, and Jews; Bulgarians, Serbians, and Roumanians—to be recognised by their newspapers. Among newspapers, indeed, you recognise six in different languages on looking round; and as for spoken languages, they make a babel of the place.

Through this varied crowd go pedlars vending the most incongruous articles. On one tray are bootlaces, cheap socks and underclothing, and small bottles of scent. On another boots and shoes and ties, plated studs and links, bright ties, red fezzes, and cloth caps. And the pedlars find a ready sale for their wares. A Turkish officer is not above buying a cheap vest after turning over the whole stock; and a man who reads a book of law from time to time is easily taken by a gay tie. There are also sweetmeat sellers, and bootblacks who do a busy trade and glance critically at the polish on your boots. Yet other itinerant traders are men loaded with great trays of lettuces dripping with water from the nearest street fountain. It is the lettuce season, and the vegetable is eaten in this public place by high and low with a great sense of fitness. It is a sight that

never loses its interest to watch the processes of preparation and eating in these circumstances. The vendor takes the great Cos lettuce from its tray, adroitly swishes off the pointed end with a sheath knife, presses open the leaves, throws in a dusting of salt, and hands the greenery to his customer as if it were a bouquet. Then the buyer—officer, banker, private, mullah—does his part, leaf by leaf, with evident relish. Every one sips black coffee—a small cup of it is the price of the seat. Every one smokes, chiefly cigarettes; but the more sedate parties take turn and turn about at a hubble-bubble which the waiter keeps alight with pieces of live charcoal.

But interest in the scene is not confined to the space under the trees. Along the roadway of the Place an interesting traffic is always passing. Motor-lorries go by loaded with bales of military uniforms and rolls of barbed wire. Turkish women in scarlet, black, green, orange, blue, yellow, and pink silks, that the fierce sunlight makes almost painful to the eye, pass and repass. They keep a little way out to avoid the close gaze of men at the tables, and seem to form groups in passing as if to keep each other in countenance. Among the branches of the single row of trees along the farther side of the Place linesmen are stretching telegraph-wires, thus saving the need for poles. Two drovers have come with a small flock of sheep for some slaughter-house, and being tired, lie on the pavement under the same trees with their animals about them, and watch the crowded cafés with interest. A group of peasants taken for the army slouch along guarded by *zaptiehs*. The students of a Moslem theological school in blue gowns march in procession on their way to Sta Sophia. Tourists alight from cabs with the same destination.

Above the trees towers Sta Sophia, its red-banded front, its minarets and dome all in clear view against the blue sky. You can clearly see the deformation of the dome, which is said to portend its early destruction. Men are working up there, removing old lead and laying new, which they haul up two hundred feet painfully by hand, and look the while no more than a cluster of ants. And then a white figure appears in the gallery of a minaret, the open right hand goes to the cheek, and there comes the call to prayer. It adds the last Eastern touch to the scene, and also reminds you that it is time to leave. So perhaps you go to a quiet Turkish restaurant not far from the Sublime Porte, where you know that excellent *pilaf* of the variety named Ali Pasha, and good *yoghourt* and a bottle of Balkan wine, may be found.

From the early days of the Greek Empire foreign colonies in Constantinople have had privileges of an unusual kind. The old Genoese colony made treaties securing these privileges from its hosts, and the Great Powers have done the same for their nationals. No

Constantinople Government yet seems to have been able to avoid this singular derogation of its sovereignty. It existed until the Capitulations were abrogated by the Turkish Government last year.

How many people know that in Constantinople till then were a British prison, with a British gaoler and prisoners; and a court of law with two British judges, British barristers, and British juries? Not many. And as few know that a British subject throughout the Turkish Empire was under the laws of his own country. His court could try and punish him for any offence. He could be found guilty and sentenced to death with as much of legal pomp and ceremony, black cap and all, by his own countrymen in this foreign capital as at the Old Bailey. Twice in recent years there has been a trial on the capital charge, and at one of them the death sentence was passed. But though the court is competent to pass sentence of death, it may not be carried out. There is no capital punishment for murder in Turkish law, and to have it inflicted by an Alien government is more than Turkish opinion can tolerate. So by treaty all foreign death sentences must be commuted to imprisonment for a term not exceeding twenty years.

The foreign colonies in Turkey enjoyed favoured conditions under the Capitulations. Not only were they under their country's laws, but they paid no Income Tax, and no direct taxes of any sort, unless as householders they became liable for Rates. They could not be drafted into the army or navy, though born in the country. They had their own post offices, their own harbour-masters for their shipping, and their own schools and hospitals.

The tall building in a street off Galata Quay, with the Royal Arms above the doorway, was one with which the English visitor to Constantinople soon became acquainted. It was the British Post Office, where he received and sent off his English letters, trusting nothing to the Ottoman mails. "C/o the British Post Office, Galata," too, was the address of every British and American citizen in Constantinople. But the office had its limitations. It could engage in no inland postal work in Turkey, could forward no telegrams, make no charge for local letters, and its collecting boxes in the city could stand only on British property; but it did much business, chiefly in foreign mails, and was largely used by natives. At the time of incoming or outgoing mails it was thronged with a crowd almost as diverse as that which frequents the Place Sta Sophia. English and American civilians, bluejackets and marines, Turkish sailors and soldiers, Maltese and native civilians of many races, made it the most picturesque post office controlled from St Martin's-le-Grand. A counter clerk might be heard replying in English, French, Turkish, and Greek to as many successive inquiries.

The British colony in Constantinople has always been of a different character to that

established in Smyrna. The capital never had the trade with England that two hundred years ago gave Smyrna an important name in English commerce. So while thirty English ships might be counted together in Smyrna Bay, and the colony ashore became populous enough to support a "British Tavern," Constantinople did little more than provide ambassadors and travellers with the materials for interesting chronicles. But the colony there grew rapidly after the Crimean War, and a generation later was the most important in the city. Five thousand British drew their living from the Turkish Naval Dockyard alone, in those days when the Ottoman Navy counted itself one of the greatest among those of Mediterranean Powers. When naval decline took place the colony declined; and though influential and well-to-do, was only the fifth in size before the Italian War.

Some English families have been settled in the city for generations. Their interests are in the country, but under the protection of the Capitulations they have held to their nationality as a birthright of value. Others, however, have become Ottoman subjects; not many, perhaps, but they are to be found. It comes as a shock when a devout Moslem, whom perhaps you have known as Mahmud Bey, tells you in a quiet moment that his original name was Smith, his wife's maiden name Brown, and that his family of little Selims, Mustaphas, Abduls, and Armas are of purest English stock. But British descent, hidden under strange names, is claimed somewhat often in Constantinople. A Maltese — there are more than a thousand of these islanders in the city—perhaps bearing the name Vasari (it is near enough), will figure his family tree for you and show that three generations back he sprang from an English Governor of Malta whose name was not unlike his own. Or you stumble upon an Armenian, so devoid of Armenian characteristics as to cause remark, yet having no doubt himself as to his race. Later you hear a strange story about the man. That as an infant he came with his parents from England; that within a year his mother died, and his father married an Armenian. That then the father died, and the Armenian stepmother married again, and died soon afterwards. By this time all count had been lost of the English child's nationality, and he was brought up by Armenians and passed for one of them. And then, when possessing an undeniably Armenian family of his own, his parentage was unravelled.

No British people anywhere have choice of more pleasant spots in which to live than those who find themselves at Constantinople. Turkish restrictions forbid certain localities to Christians, such as portions of the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, but that is of little matter. Many live in Pera during the winter, and for the summer go to villages along the Bosphorus. Others chose their homes where they may live all the year round, and

form communities each with its own characteristics. A newcomer to Constantinople receives much advice as to where he shall live. If fond of yachting and boat-sailing, he is plainly intended for Moda Bay, a delightful place on the Sea of Marmora, just beyond Scutari, where many of the long-settled English families have their homes. Having other tastes, he is directed to other places: to Candilli, Bebek, Roumeli Hissar — stronghold of the American colony — and Therapia, if he wishes for the Bosphorus; or advised that for convenience and everything else Pera cannot be equalled. Much depends upon where the giver of advice lives himself. For though you find in time that most of your compatriots would prefer for themselves to winter in Pera and pass the summer at Therapia, not many of them attain it. They get into a village community, and with local patriotism swear by it and decry all others. So you learn on the Bosphorus that Moda Bay connotes a certain raffishness; at Moda Bay that all living below Therapia are smug. Both districts regard Pera with respect if an area not far from the Grand Rue is implied, but draw a distinction between that and the remainder. The Bosphorus villages, too, each passes critical opinions upon its fellows. Sunday tennis is prohibited on the courts of some; but rivals point out that no folk are so punctual in catching the boat for Sunday tennis and cricket elsewhere as those from the villages of the "unco guid."

No mention of the British Colony would be complete without a reference to the British cemetery at Scutari. It has, however, an interest wider than that belonging to the civilian community that lays its dead there; for it is the resting-place of those British soldiers who died of wounds and disease in the hospitals at Scutari during the Crimean War. They lie here in as pleasant a graveyard surely as may be found. It stands at the top of a low cliff facing west across the Sea of Marmora; trees shade it—pine and ilex, cedar and laurel; its flower-beds and paths are carefully tended; and in the military quarter stands the Crimean Obelisk with its watching angels looking down upon the graves below. The inscriptions upon the tombstones are beginning now to have an old-world look; not so much by weather as in style and lettering. Linger among the tombstones of this sweet burying-ground, all erected nearly sixty years ago, and you get a vivid impression of how fashion has changed in these matters; and how long since the dead were laid here. Among the inscriptions is one that in this company catches the eye with strange interest. It is to a nurse, one of those who went out to serve in the frightful hospitals of Scutari. After the homely English name are the words, "She hath done what she could." You linger and pass by, and then return to stand again before the simple epitaph; to look from it across

to the minaretted city beyond the Bosphorus; and then to the Marmora dotted with white lateen sails. Such an inscription and name you would expect to meet under the yews of a sleeping churchyard in England—not here. And speculations arise as to what urgings of pity and duty brought her to rest at last in this spot.

In no respect has Constantinople retained its earlier character so much as in its dramatic political scenes, and its small regard for human life. No South American republic has been able to keep pace with it in these respects. Within the last few years it has seen revolutions and attempts at revolution that, counting great and small, one is at a loss to number. Within the same period how many assassinations, private executions, and hangings at dawn at the end of Galata Bridge, that provided a row of white-hooded, dangling corpses for all to see as they came in to business! Stretch the period to twenty-five years and it provides massacres in keeping with the city's worst. Those of Belisarius in the Hippodrome, of the Jannissaries in the same place, and of those that followed two captures of the city. No one knows how many Armenians fell in the massacres at the close of the last century, but some who should be able to judge say ten thousand. And then of wars! No less than three in a space of four years —to say nothing of wars in the Yemen—with the incidental sight of the world's warships in the Bosphorus to protect the lives and property of neutrals. Three years ago the city heard daily for weeks the sound of an enemy's guns outside Chatalja Lines. And in these present days, it is said, the thunder of guns from the Dardanelles can be heard plainly when the wind is from the west.

The old city's war-time sights three years since had their own peculiar character. Coming down the Bosphorus one sleepy October afternoon the writer heard the far-off sound of drums coming from every village, floating out of the valleys, rising and dying away. The air was marvellously still, and the sounds coming from great distances were like the scarcely heard droning of an aeroplane. The word had gone out that day to mobilise for the Balkan War, and the village *behkjis* were doing their part by drum. And then a few weeks later, in the darkness and drizzle of a November evening, there was the sight of 9000 grizzled Redifs marching over Galata Bridge. They were to crowd on board three transports waiting to convey them to Media on the Bulgarian flank. The men's spirits were low, so artifice was adopted to raise them. Twice mounted orderlies dashed up to a steamer's side and passed a telegram to the officer commanding the troops. The ship was so crowded that he had to be hauled over men's heads to gain the flying bridge; but up there he dramatically opened and read his telegram.

It told of victory, and he read it aloud to his men. The second telegram told of another victory; and again, with suitable tone and manner, he read it from the same place to the accompaniment of cheering that half an hour before would have seemed impossible to raise.

And recall that Sunday of the great Bulgarian attack on Chatalja, when the concussion of guns was breaking windows in Pera. Every one believed that the enemy would get through; that the next day they would appear before the old wall, and enter Pera at the same time. Roofs and other points of vantage were black with watching people. A long bar of smoke drifted in from the battlefield during the afternoon, and hung slanting along the valley of the Golden Horn. It seemed like a portent to many; and Turkish men and women in Stamboul might have been seen weeping at the conviction that Moslem rule was as good as over.

Quite another scene was that, the next morning, of 500 British bluejackets coming up the hill from the Bosphorus on their way to the British Embassy. A couple of hours later some not on duty were playing leap-frog on the garden paths. That, too, was a spectacle in harmony with the city's history.

Any one familiar with Constantinople must have at this time the keenest interest as to what will come from the struggle now proceeding. He can imagine many of the scenes that are being enacted; they are no more than a repetition of the past. But the future he cannot imagine. He cannot think of the city without its Moslem lords. He finds it difficult to imagine Sta Sophia no longer a mosque but a church, and hopes that when the change comes about the minarets will not be taken down. He speculates upon the ownership of the other great mosques when the Moslem population shall have withdrawn—as it will withdraw under Christian rule. Upon monuments, too, the Serpent Column and the others; and the treasures in the Imperial Museum, the Sarcophagus of Alexander, and the Hittite stones, will they be clutched to enrich other capitals? And also as to what hidden things a Christian occupation will reveal. What about the great hoard of ancient armour valued once at many millions that rumour says exists? And the ancient MSS., also of rumour so far; and the more definite secret archives that interested persons were always endeavouring to get burned? There is no end to questions of this sort that arise in the mind.

For apart from its political importance, the fall of Constantinople will be an event more interesting than anything of the kind one can recall.

THE THIRTY-NINE STEPS.

BY H. DE V.

CHAPTER I.—THE MAN WHO DIED.

I RETURNED from the City about three o'clock on that May afternoon pretty well disgusted with life. I had been three months in the Old Country, and was fed up with it. If any one had told me a year ago that I would have been feeling like that I should have laughed at him; but there was the fact. The weather made me liverish, the talk of the ordinary Englishman made me sick, I couldn't get enough exercise, and the amusements of London seemed as flat as soda-water that has been standing in the sun. "Richard Hannay," I kept telling myself, "you have got into the wrong ditch, my friend, and you had better climb out."

It made me bite my lips to think of the plans I had been building up those last years in Buluwayo. I had got my pile —not one of the big ones, but good enough for me; and I had figured out all kinds of ways of enjoying myself. My father had brought me out from Scotland at the age of six, and I had never been home since; so England was a sort of Arabian Nights to me, and I counted on stopping there for the rest of my days. But from the first I was disappointed with it. In about a week I was tired of seeing sights, and in less than a month I had had enough of restaurants and theatres and race-meetings. I had no real pal to go about with, which probably explains things. Plenty of people invited me to their houses, but they didn't seem much interested in me. They would fling me a question or two about South Africa, and then get on to their own affairs. A lot of Imperialist ladies asked me to tea to meet schoolmasters from New Zealand and editors from Vancouver, and that was the dismalest business of all. Here was I, thirty-seven years old, sound in wind and limb, with enough money to have a good time, yawning my head off all day. I had just about settled to clear out and get back to the veld, for I was the best bored man in the United Kingdom.

That afternoon I had been worrying my brokers about investments to give my mind something to work on, and on my way home I turned into my club—rather a pot-house, which took in Colonial members. I had a long drink, and read the evening papers. They were full of the row in the Near East, and there was

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an article about Karolides, the Greek Premier. I rather fancied the chap. From all accounts he seemed the one big man in the show; and he played a straight game too, which was more than could be said for most of them. I gathered that they hated him pretty blackly in Berlin and Vienna, but that we were going to stick by him, and one paper said that he was the only barrier between Europe and Armageddon. I remember wondering if I could get a job in those parts. It struck me that Albania was the sort of place that might keep a man from yawning.

About six o'clock I went home, dressed, dined at the Café Royal, and turned into a music-hall. It was a silly show, all capering women and monkey-faced men, and I did not stay long. The night was fine and clear as I walked back to the flat I had hired near Portland Place. The crowd surged past me on the pavements, busy and chattering, and I envied the people for having something to do. These shop-girls and clerks and dandies and policemen had some interest in life that kept them going. I gave half-a-crown to a beggar because I saw him yawn; he was a fellow-sufferer. At Oxford Circus I looked up into the spring sky and I made a vow. I would give the Old Country another day to fit me into something; if nothing happened, I would take the next boat for the Cape.

My flat was the first floor in a new block behind Langham Place. There was a common staircase, with a porter and a liftman at the entrance, but there was no restaurant or anything of that sort, and each flat was quite shut off from the others. I hate servants on the premises, so I had a fellow to look after me who came in by the day. He arrived before eight o'clock every morning and used to depart at seven, for I never dined at home.

I was just fitting my key into the door when I noticed a man at my elbow. I had not seen him approach, and the sudden appearance made me start. He was a slim man, with a short brown beard and small, gimlety blue eyes. I recognised him as the occupant of a flat on the top floor, with whom I had passed the time of day on the stairs.

"Can I speak to you?" he said. "May I come in for a minute?" He was steadying his voice with an effort, and his hand was pawing my arm.

I got my door open and motioned him in. No sooner was he over the threshold than he made a dash for my back-room, where I used to smoke and write my letters. Then he bolted back.

"Is the door locked?" he asked feverishly, and he fastened the chain with his own hand.

"I'm very sorry," he said humbly. "It's a mighty liberty, but you looked the kind of man who would understand. I've had you in my mind all this week when things got trouble-

some. Say, will you do me a good turn?"

"I'll listen to you," I said. "That's all I'll promise." I was getting worried by the antics of this nervous little chap.

There was a tray of drinks on a table beside him, from which he filled himself a stiff whisky-and-soda. He drank it off in three gulps, and cracked the glass as he set it down.

"Pardon," he said, "I'm a bit rattled to-night. You see, I happen at this moment to be dead."

I sat down in an arm-chair and lit my pipe.

"What does it feel like?" I asked. I was pretty certain that I had to deal with a madman.

A smile flickered over his drawn face. "I'm not mad—yet. Say, sir, I've been watching you, and I reckon you're a cool customer. I reckon, too, you're an honest man, and not afraid of playing a bold hand. I'm going to confide in you. I need help worse than any man ever needed it, and I want to know if I can count you in."

"Get on with your yarn," I said, "and I'll tell you."

He seemed to brace himself for a great effort, and then started on the queerest rigmarole. I didn't get hold of it at first, and I had to stop and ask him questions. But here is the gist of it:—

He was an American, from Kentucky, and after college, being pretty well off, he had started out to see the world. He wrote a bit, and acted as war correspondent for a Chicago paper, and spent a year or two in South-Eastern Europe. I gathered that he was a fine linguist, and had got to know pretty well the society in those parts. He spoke familiarly of many names that I remembered to have seen in the newspapers.

He had played about with politics, he told me, at first for the interest of them, and then because he couldn't help himself. I read him as a sharp, restless fellow, who always wanted to get down to the roots of things. He got a little further down than he wanted.

I am giving you what he told me as well as I could make it out. Away behind all the Governments and the armies there was a big subterranean movement going on, engineered by very dangerous people. He had come on it by accident; it fascinated him; he went further, and then he got caught. I gathered that most of the people in it were the sort of educated anarchists that make revolutions, but that beside them there were financiers who were playing for money. A clever man can make big profits on a falling market, and it suited the book of both classes to set Europe by the ears. He told me some queer things that explained a lot that had puzzled me—things that happened in the Balkan War, how one state suddenly came out on top, why alliances were made and broken, why certain men disappeared, and where the sinews of war came from. The aim of the whole conspiracy was to get Russia and Germany at loggerheads.

When I asked Why, he said

that the anarchist lot thought it would give them their chance. Everything would be in the melting-pot, and they looked to see a new world emerge. The capitalists would rake in the shekels, and make fortunes by buying up wreckage. Capital, he said, had no conscience and no fatherland; besides, the Jew was behind it, and the Jew hated Russia worse than hell.

"Do you wonder?" he cried. "For three hundred years they have been persecuted, and this is the return match for the *pogroms*. The Jew is everywhere, but you have to go far down the backstairs to find him. Take any big Teutonic business concern. If you have dealings with it the first man you meet is Prince *von und zu* Something, an elegant young man who talks Eton-and-Harrow English. But he cuts no ice. If your business is big, you get behind him and find a prognathous Westphalian with a retreating brow and the manners of a hog. He is the German business man that gives your English papers the shakes. But if you're on the biggest kind of job and are bound to get to the real boss, ten to one you are brought up against a little white-faced Jew in a bath-chair with an eye like a rattlesnake. Yes, sir, he is the man who is ruling the world just now, and he has his knife in the Empire of the Tzar, because his aunt was outraged and his father flogged in some one-horse location on the Volga."

I could not help saying that his Jew-anarchists seemed to have got left behind a little.

"Yes and no," he said. "They won up to a point, but they struck a bigger thing than money, a thing that couldn't be bought, the old elemental fighting instincts of man. If you're going to be killed you invent some kind of flag and country to fight for, and if you survive you get to love the thing. These foolish devils of soldiers have found something they care for, and that has upset the pretty plan laid in Berlin and Vienna. But my friends haven't played their last card by a long sight. They've got the ace up their sleeves, and unless I can keep alive for a month they are going to play it and win."

"But I thought you were dead," I put in.

"*Mors janua vitæ*," he smiled. (I recognised the quotation: it was about all the Latin I knew.) "I'm coming to that, but I've got to put you wise about a lot of things first. If you read your newspaper, I guess you know the name of Constantine Karolides?"

I sat up at that, for I had been reading about him that very afternoon.

"He is the man that has wrecked all their games. He is the one big brain in the whole show, and he happens also to be an honest man. Therefore he has been marked down these twelve months past. I found that out—not that it was difficult, for any fool could guess as much. But I found out the way they were going to get him, and that

knowledge was deadly. That's why I have had to decease."

He had another drink and I mixed it for him myself, for I was getting interested in the beggar.

"They can't get him in his own land, for he has a body-guard of Epirotes that would skin their grandmothers. But on the 15th day of June he is coming to this city. The British Foreign Office has taken to having International tea-parties, and the biggest of them is due on that date. Now Karolides is reckoned the principal guest, and if my friends have their way he will never return to his admiring countrymen."

"That's simple enough, anyhow," I said. "You can warn him and keep him at home."

"And play their game?" he asked sharply. "If he does not come they win, for he's the only man that can straighten out the tangle. And if his Government are warned he won't come, for he does not know how big the stakes will be on June the 15th."

"What about the British Government?" I said. "They're not going to let their guests be murdered. Tip them the wink, and they'll take extra precautions."

"No good. They might stuff your city with plain-clothes detectives and double the police and Constantine would still be a doomed man. My friends are not playing this game for candy. They want a big occasion for the taking off, with the eyes of all Europe on it. He'll be murdered by an Austrian, and there'll be plenty of evidence to show the connivance of the big folk in Vienna and Berlin. It will all be an infernal lie, of course, but the case will look black enough to the world. I'm not talking hot air, my friend. I happen to know every detail of the hellish contrivance, and I can tell you it will be the most finished piece of black-guardism since the Borgias. But it's not going to come off if there's a certain man who knows the wheels of the business alive right here in London on the 15th day of June. And that man is going to be your servant, Franklin P. Scudder."

I was getting to like the little chap. His jaw had shut like a rat-trap, and there was the fire of battle in his gimlety eyes. If he was spinning me a yarn he could act up to it.

"Where did you find out this story?" I asked.

"I got the first hint in an inn on the Achensee in Tyrol. That set me inquiring, and I collected my other clues in a fur-shop in the Galician quarter of Buda, in a Strangers' Club in Vienna, and in a little bookshop off the Racknitz-strasse in Leipsic. I completed my evidence ten days ago in Paris. I can't tell you the details now, for it's something of a history. When I was quite sure in my own mind I judged it my business to disappear, and I reached this city by a mighty queer circuit. I left Paris a dandified young French-American, and I sailed from Hamburg a Jew diamond merchant. In

Norway I was an English student of Ibsen collecting materials for lectures, but when I left Bergen I was a cinema-man with special ski films. And I came here from Leith with a lot of pulp-wood propositions in my pocket to put before the London newspapers. Till yesterday I thought I had muddied my trail some, and was feeling pretty happy. Then . . ."

The recollection seemed to upset him, and he gulped down some more whisky.

"Then I saw a man standing in the street outside this block. I used to stay close in my room all day, and only slip out after dark for an hour or two. I watched him for a bit from my window, and I thought I recognised him. . . . He came in and spoke to the porter. . . . When I came back from my walk last night I found a card in my letter-box. It bore the name of the man I want least to meet on God's earth."

I think that the look in my companion's eyes, the sheer naked scare on his face, completed my conviction of his honesty. My own voice sharpened a bit as I asked him what he did next.

"I realised that I was bottled as sure as a pickled herring, and that there was only one way out. I had to die. If my pursuers knew I was dead they would go to sleep again."

"How did you manage it?"

"I told the man that valets me that I was feeling pretty bad, and I got myself up to look like death. That wasn't difficult, for I'm no slouch at disguises. Then I got a corpse —you can always get a body in London if you know where to go for it. I fetched it back in a trunk on the top of a four-wheeler, and I had to be assisted upstairs to my room. You see I had to pile up some evidence for the inquest. I went to bed and got my man to mix me a sleeping-draught, and then told him to clear out. He wanted to fetch a doctor, but I swore some and said I couldn't abide leeches. When I was left alone I started in to fake up that corpse. He was my size, and I judged had perished from too much alcohol, so I put some spirits handy about the place. The jaw was the weak point in the likeness, so I blew it away with a revolver. I daresay there will be somebody to-morrow to swear to having heard a shot, but there are no neighbours on my floor, and I guessed I could risk it. So I left the body in bed dressed up in my pyjamas with a revolver lying on the bed-clothes and a considerable mess around. Then I got into a suit of clothes I had kept waiting for emergencies. I didn't dare to shave for fear of leaving tracks, and besides it wasn't any kind of use my trying to get into the streets. I had had you in my mind all day, and there seemed nothing to do but to make an appeal to you. I watched from my window till I saw you come home, and then slipped down the stair to meet you. . . . There, sir, I guess you know about

as much as me of this business."

He sat blinking like an owl, fluttering with nerves and yet desperately determined. By this time I was pretty well convinced that he was going straight with me. It was the wildest sort of narrative, but I had heard in my time many steep tales which had turned out to be true, and I had made a practice of judging the man rather than the story. If he had wanted to get a location in my flat, and then cut my throat, he would have pitched a milder yarn.

"Hand me your key," I said, "and I'll take a look at the corpse. Excuse my caution, but I'm bound to verify a bit if I can."

He shook his head mournfully. "I reckoned you'd ask for that, but I haven't got it. It's on my chain on the dressing-table. I had to leave it behind, for I couldn't leave any clues to breed suspicions. The gentry who are after me are pretty bright-eyed citizens. You'll have to take me on trust for the night, and to-morrow you'll get proof of the corpse business right enough."

I thought for an instant or two. "Right. I'll trust you for the night. I'll lock you into this room and keep the key. Just one word, Mr Scudder. I believe you're straight, but if so be you are not I should warn you that I'm a handy man with a gun."

"Sure," he said, jumping up with some briskness. "I haven't the privilege of your name, sir, but let me tell you that you're a white man. I'll thank you to lend me a razor."

I took him into my bedroom and turned him loose. In half an hour's time a figure came out that I scarcely recognised. Only his gimlety hungry eyes were the same. He was shaved clean, his hair was parted in the middle, and he had cut his eyebrows. Further, he carried himself as if he had been drilled, and was the very model, even to the brown complexion, of some British officer who had had a long spell in India. He had a monocle, too, which he stuck in his eye, and every trace of the American had gone out of his speech.

"My hat! Mr Scudder——" I stammered.

"Not Mr Scudder," he corrected; "Captain Theophilus Digby, of the 40th Ghurkas, presently home on leave. I'll thank you to remember that, sir."

I made him up a bed in my smoking-room and sought my own couch, more cheerful than I had been for the past month. Things did happen occasionally, even in this god-forgotten metropolis.

I woke next morning to hear my man, Paddock, making the deuce of a row at the smoking-room door. Paddock was a fellow I had done a good turn to out on the Selakwi, and I had inspanned him as my servant as soon as I got to England. He had about as much gift of the gab as a hippopotamus, and was not a great hand at valeting, but I

knew I could count on his loyalty.

"Stop that row, Paddock," I said. "There's a friend of mine, Captain — Captain" (I couldn't remember the name) "dossing down in there. Get breakfast for two and then come and speak to me."

I told Paddock a fine story about how my friend was a great swell, with his nerves pretty bad from overwork, who wanted absolute rest and stillness. Nobody had got to know he was here, or he would be beseiged by communications from the India Office and the Prime Minister and his cure would be ruined. I am bound to say Scudder played up splendidly when he came to breakfast. He fixed Paddock with his eye-glass, just like a British officer, asked him about the Boer War, and slung out at me a lot of stuff about imaginary pals. Paddock couldn't learn to call me "sir," but he "sirred" Scudder as if his life depended on it.

I left him with the newspaper and a box of cigars, and went down to the City till luncheon. When I got back the porter had an important face.

"Nawsty business 'ere this morning, sir. Gent in No. 15 been and shot 'isself. They've just took 'im to the mortiary. The police are up there now."

I ascended to No. 15, and found a couple of bobbies and an inspector busy making an examination. I asked a few idiotic questions, and they soon kicked me out. Then I found the man that had valeted Scudder, and pumped him, but I could see he suspected nothing. He was a whining fellow with a churchyard face, and half-a-crown went far to console him.

I attended the inquest next day. A partner of some publishing firm gave evidence that the deceased had brought him wood-pulp propositions, and had been, he believed, an agent of an American business. The jury found it a case of suicide while of unsound mind, and the few effects were handed over to the American Consul to deal with. I gave Scudder a full account of the affair, and it interested him greatly. He said he wished he could have attended the inquest, for he reckoned it would be about as spicy as to read one's own obituary notice.

The first two days he stayed with me in that back room he was very peaceful. He read and smoked a bit, and made a heap of jottings in a note-book, and every night we had a game of chess, at which he beat me hollow. I think he was nursing his nerves back to health, for he had had a pretty trying time. But on the third day I could see he was beginning to get restless. He fixed up a list of the days till June 15th, and ticked each off with a red pencil, making remarks in shorthand against them. I would find him sunk in a brown study, with his sharp eyes abstracted, and after these spells of meditation he was apt to be very despondent.

Then I could see that he began to get edgy again. He

listened for little noises, and was always asking me if Paddock could be trusted. Once or twice he got very peevish, and apologised for it. I didn't blame him. I made every allowance, for he had taken on a fairly stiff job.

It was not the safety of his own skin that troubled him, but the success of the scheme he had planned. That little man was clean pluck all through, without a soft spot in him. One night he was very solemn.

"Say, Hannay," he said, "I judge I should let you a bit deeper into this business. I should hate to go out without leaving somebody else to put up a fight." And he began to tell me in detail what I had only heard from him vaguely.

I did not give him very close attention. The fact is, I was more interested in his own adventures than in his high politics. I reckoned that Karolides and his affairs were not my business, leaving all that to him. So a lot that he said slipped clean out of my memory. I remember that he was very clear that the danger to Karolides would not begin till he had got to London, and would come from the very highest quarters, where there would be no thought of suspicion. He mentioned the name of a woman—Julia Czechenyi—as having something to do with the danger. She would be the decoy, I gathered, to get Karolides out of the care of his guards. He talked, too, about a Black Stone and a man that lisped in his speech, and he described very particularly somebody that he never referred to without a shudder—an old man with a young voice who could hood his eyes like a hawk.

He spoke a good deal about death, too. He was mortally anxious about winning through with his job, but he didn't care a rush for his life.

"I reckon it's like going to sleep when you are pretty well tired out, and waking to find a summer day with the scent of hay coming in at the window. I used to thank God for such mornings way back in the Blue-Grass country, and I guess I'll thank Him when I wake up on the other side of Jordan."

Next day he was much more cheerful, and read the life of Stonewall Jackson much of the time. I went out to dinner with a mining engineer I had got to see on business, and came back about half-past ten in time for our game of chess before turning in.

I had a cigar in my mouth, I remember, as I pushed open the smoking-room door. The lights were not lit, which struck me as odd. I wondered if Scudder had turned in already.

I snapped the switch, but there was nobody there. Then I saw something in the far corner which made me drop my cigar and fall into a cold sweat.

My guest was lying sprawled on his back. There was a long knife through his heart which skewered him to the floor.

CHAPTER II.—THE MILKMAN SETS OUT ON HIS TRAVELS.

I sat down in an arm-chair and felt very sick. That lasted for maybe five minutes, and was succeeded by a fit of the horrors. The poor staring white face on the floor was more than I could bear, and I managed to get a table-cloth and cover it. Then I staggered to a cupboard, found the brandy and swallowed several mouthfuls. I had seen men die violently before; indeed I had killed a few myself in the Matabele War; but this cold-blooded indoor business was different. Still I managed to pull myself together. I looked at my watch, and saw that it was half-past ten. An idea seized me, and I went over the flat with a small-tooth comb. There was nobody there, nor any trace of anybody, but I shuttered and bolted all the windows and put the chain on the door.

By this time my wits were coming back to me, and I could think again. It took me about an hour to figure the thing out, and I did not hurry, for, unless the murderer came back, I had till about six o'clock in the morning for my cogitations.

I was in the soup — that was pretty clear. Any shadow of a doubt I might have had about the truth of Scudder's tale was now gone. The proof of it was lying under the table-cloth. The men who knew that he knew what he knew had found him, and had taken the best way to make certain of his silence. Yes; but he had been in my rooms four days, and his enemies must have reckoned that he had confided in me. So I would be the next to go. It might be that very night, or next day, or the day after, but my number was up all right.

Then suddenly I thought of another probability. Supposing I went out now and called in the police, or went to bed and let Paddock find the body and call them in the morning. What kind of story was I to tell about Scudder? I had lied to Paddock about him, and the whole thing looked desperately fishy. If I made a clean breast of it and told the police everything he had told me, they would simply laugh at me. The odds were a thousand to one that I would be charged with the murder, and the circumstantial evidence was strong enough to hang me. Few people knew me in England; I had no real pal who could come forward and swear to my character. Perhaps that was what those secret enemies were playing for. They were clever enough for anything, and an English prison was as good a way of getting rid of me till after June 15th as a knife in my chest.

Besides, if I told the whole story, and by any miracle was believed, I would be playing their game. Karolides would stay at home, which was what they wanted. Somehow or other the sight of Scudder's dead face had made me a pas-

sionate believer in his scheme. He was gone, but he had taken me into his confidence, and I was pretty well bound to carry on his work. You may think this ridiculous for a man in danger of his life, but that was the way I looked at it. I am an ordinary sort of fellow, not braver than other people, but I hate to see a good man downed, and that long knife would not be the end of Scudder if I could play the game in his place.

It took me an hour or two to think this out, and by that time I had come to a decision. I must vanish somehow, and keep vanished till the end of the second week of June. Then I must somehow find a way to get in touch with the Government people and tell them what Scudder had told me. I wished to heaven he had told me more, and that I had listened more carefully to the little he had told me. I knew nothing but the barest facts. There was a big risk that, even if I weathered the other dangers, I would not be believed in the end. I must take my chance of that, and hope that something might happen which would confirm my tale in the eyes of the Government.

My first job was to keep going for the next three weeks. It was now the 24th day of May, and that meant twenty days of hiding before I could venture to approach the powers that be. I reckoned that two sets of people would be looking for me—Scudder's enemies to put me out of existence, and the police, who would want me for Scudder's murder. It was going to be a giddy hunt, and it was queer how the prospect comforted me. I had been slack so long that almost any chance of activity was welcome. When I had to sit alone with that corpse and wait on Fortune I was no better than a crushed worm, but if my neck's safety was to hang on my own wits I was prepared to be cheerful about it.

My next thought was whether Scudder had any papers about him to give me a better clue to the business. I drew back the table-cloth and searched his pockets, for I had no longer any shrinking from the body. The face was wonderfully calm for a man who had been struck down in a moment. There was nothing in the breast-pocket, and only a few loose coins and a cigar-holder in the waistcoat. The trousers held a little penknife and some silver, and the side-pocket of his jacket contained an old crocodile-skin cigar-case. There was no sign of the little black book in which I had seen him making notes. That had no doubt been taken by his murderer.

But as I looked up from my task I saw that some drawers had been pulled out in the writing-table. Scudder would never have left them in that state, for he was the tidiest of mortals. Some one must have been searching for something—perhaps for the pocket-book.

I went round the flat and found that everything had

been ransacked—the inside of books, drawers, cupboards, boxes, even the pockets of the clothes in my wardrobe, and the sideboard in the dining-room. There was no trace of the book. Most likely the enemy had found it, but they had not found it on Scudder's body.

Then I got out an atlas and looked at a big map of the British Isles. My notion was to get off to some wild district, where my veldcraft would be of some use to me, for I would be like a trapped rat in a city. I considered that Scotland would be best, for my people were Scotch and I could pass anywhere as an ordinary Scotsman. I had half an idea at first to be a German tourist, for my father had had German partners, and I had been brought up to speak the tongue pretty fluently, not to mention having put in three years prospecting for copper in German Damaraland. But I calculated that it would be less conspicuous to be a Scot, and less in a line with what the police might know of my past. I fixed on Galloway as the best place to go to. It was the nearest wild part of Scotland, so far as I could figure it out, and from the look of the map was not over thick with population.

A search in Bradshaw informed me that a train left St Pancras at 7.10, which would land me at any Galloway station in the late afternoon. That was well enough, but a more important matter was how I was to make my way to the station, for I was pretty certain that Scudder's friends would be watching outside. This puzzled me for a bit; then I had an inspiration, on which I went to bed and slept for two troubled hours.

I got up at four and opened my bedroom shutters. The faint light of a fine summer morning was flooding the skies, and the sparrows had begun to chatter. I had a great revulsion of feeling, and felt a god-forgotten fool. My inclination was to let things slide, and trust to the British police taking a reasonable view of my case. But as I reviewed the situation I could find no arguments to bring against my decision of the previous night, so with a wry mouth I resolved to go on with my plan. I was not feeling in any particular funk; only disinclined to go looking for trouble, if you understand me.

I hunted out a well-used tweed suit, a pair of strong nailed boots, and a flannel shirt with a collar. Into my pockets I stuffed a spare shirt, a cloth cap, some handkerchiefs, and a tooth-brush. I had drawn a good sum in gold from the bank two days before, in case Scudder should want money, and I took fifty pounds of it in sovereigns in a belt which I had brought back from Rhodesia. That was about all I wanted. Then I had a bath, and cut my moustache, which was long and drooping, into a short stubbly fringe.

Now came the next step. Paddock used to arrive punctually at 7.30 and let himself

in with a latch-key. But about twenty minutes to seven, as I knew from bitter experience, the milkman turned up with a great clatter of cans, and deposited my share outside my door. I had seen that milkman sometimes when I had gone out for an early ride. He was a young man about my own height, with a scrubby moustache, dressed in a white overall. On him I staked all my chances.

I went into the darkened smoking-room where the rays of morning light were beginning to creep through the shutters. There I breakfasted off a whisky-and-soda and some biscuits from the cupboard. By this time it was getting on for six o'clock. I put a pipe in my pocket and filled my pouch from the tobacco jar on the table by the fireplace. As I poked into the tobacco my fingers touched something hard, and I drew out Scudder's little black pocket-book. . . .

That seemed to me a good omen. I lifted the cloth from the body and was amazed at the peace and dignity of the dead face. "Good-bye, old chap," I said; "I am going to do my best for you. Wish me well, wherever you are."

Then I hung about in the hall waiting for the milkman. That was the worst part of the business, for I was fairly choking to get out of doors. Six-thirty passed, then six-forty, but still he did not come. The fool had chosen this day of all days to be late.

At one minute after the quarter to seven I heard the rattle of the cans outside. I opened the front door, and there was my man, singling out my cans from a bunch he carried and whistling through his teeth. He jumped a bit at the sight of me.

"Come in here a moment," I said. "I want a word with you." And I led him into the dining-room.

"I reckon you're a bit of a sportsman," I said, "and I want you to do me a service. Lend me your cap and overall for ten minutes and here's a sovereign for you."

His eyes opened at the sight of the gold, and he grinned broadly. "Wot's the gyme?" he asked.

"A bet," I said. "I haven't time to explain, but to win it I've got to be a milkman for the next ten minutes. All you've got to do is to stay here till I come back. You'll be a bit late, but nobody will complain, and you'll have that quid for yourself."

"Right-O!" he said cheerily. "I ain't the man to spoil a bit of sport. Here's the rig, guv'nor."

I stuck on his flat blue hat and his white overall, picked up the cans, banged my door, and went whistling downstairs. The porter at the foot told me to shut my jaw, which sounded as if my make-up was adequate.

At first I thought there was nobody in the street. Then I caught sight of a policeman a hundred yards down, and a loafer shuffling past on the

other side. Some impulse made me raise my eyes to the house opposite, and there at a first-floor window was a face. As the loafer passed he looked up and I fancied a signal was exchanged.

I crossed the street, whistling gaily and imitating the jaunty swing of the milkman. Then I took the first side street, and turned up a left-hand turning which led past a bit of vacant ground. There was no one in the little street, so I dropped the milk-cans inside the hoarding and sent the hat and overall after them. I had only just put on my cloth cap when a postman came round the corner. I gave him good-morning and he answered me unsuspiciously. At the moment the clock of a neighbouring church struck the hour of seven.

There was not a second to spare. As soon as I got to Euston Road I took to my heels and ran. The clock at Euston Station showed five minutes past the hour. At St Pancras I had no time to take a ticket, let alone that I had not settled upon my destination. A porter told me the platform, and as I entered it I saw the train already in motion. Two station officials blocked the way, but I dodged them and clambered into the last carriage.

Three minutes later, as we were roaring through the northern tunnels, an irate guard interviewed me. He wrote out for me a ticket to Newton-Stewart, a name which had suddenly come back to my memory, and he conducted me from the first-class compartment where I had ensconced myself to a third-class smoker, occupied by a sailor and a stout woman with a child. He went off grumbling, and as I mopped my brow I observed to my companions in my broadest Scots that it was a sore job catching trains. I had already entered upon my part.

"The impidence o' that gyaird!" said the lady bitterly. "He needit a Scotch tongue to pit him in his place. He was complainin' o' this wean no haein' a ticket and her no fower till August twelvemonth, and he was objectin' to this gentleman spittin'."

The sailor morosely agreed, and I started my new life in an atmosphere of protest against authority. I reminded myself that a week ago I had been finding the world dull.

CHAPTER III.—THE ADVENTURE OF THE LITERARY INNKEEPER.

I had a solemn time travelling north that day. It was fine May weather, with the hawthorn flowering on every hedge, and I asked myself why, when I was still a free man, I had stayed on in London and not got the good of this heavenly country. I didn't dare face the restaurant car, but I got a luncheon-basket at Leeds and shared it with the fat woman. Also I got the morning's papers, with news about

starters for the Derby and the beginning of the cricket season, and some paragraphs about how Balkan affairs were settling down and a British squadron was going to Kiel. When I had done with them I got out Scudder's little black pocket-book and studied it. It was pretty well filled with jottings, chiefly figures, though now and then a name was printed in. For example, I found the words "Hofgaard," "Luneville," and "Avocado" pretty often, and especially the word "Pavia."

Now I was certain that Scudder never did anything without a reason, and I was pretty sure that there was a cypher in all this. That is a subject which has always interested me, and I did a bit at it myself once as intelligence-officer at Delagoa Bay during the Boer War. I have a head for things like chess and puzzles, and I used to reckon myself pretty good at finding out cyphers. This one looked like the numerical kind where sets of figures correspond to the letters of the alphabet, but any fairly shrewd man can find the clue to that sort after an hour or two's work, and I didn't think Scudder would have been content with anything so easy. So I fastened on the printed words, for you can make a pretty good numerical cypher if you have a key word which gives you the sequence of the letters. I tried for hours, but none of the words answered. Then I fell asleep and woke at Dumfries just in time to bundle out and get into the slow Galloway train. There was a man on the platform whose looks I didn't like, but he never glanced at me, and when I caught sight of myself in the mirror of an automatic machine I didn't wonder. With my brown face, my old tweeds, and my slouch, I was the very model of one of the hill farmers who were crowding into the third-class carriages.

I travelled with half a dozen in an atmosphere of shag and clay pipes. They had come from the weekly market, and their mouths were full of prices. I heard accounts of how the lambing had gone up the Cairn and the Deuch and a dozen other mysterious waters. Above half the men had lunched heavily and were highly flavoured with whisky, but they took no notice of me. We rumbled slowly into a land of little wooded glens and then to a great wide moorland place, gleaming with lochs, with high blue hills showing northwards.

About five o'clock the carriage had emptied, and I was left alone as I had hoped. I got out at the next station, a little place whose name I scarcely noted, set right in the heart of a bog. It reminded me of one of those forgotten little stations in the Karroo. An old station-master was digging in his garden, and with his spade over his shoulder sauntered to the train, took charge of a parcel, and went back to his potatoes. A child of ten received my ticket, and I emerged on a

white road that straggled over the brown moor.

It was a gorgeous spring evening, with every hill showing as clear as a cut amethyst. The air had the queer, rooty smell of bogs, but it was as fresh as mid-ocean, and it had the strangest effect on my spirits. I actually felt light-hearted. I might have been a boy out for a spring holiday tramp instead of a man of thirty-seven, very much wanted by the police. I felt just as I used to feel when I was starting for a big trek on a frosty morning on the high veld. If you believe me, I swung along that road whistling. There was no plan of campaign in my head, only just to go on and on in this blessed, honest-smelling hill country, for every mile put me in better humour with myself.

In a roadside planting I cut a walking-stick of hazel, and presently struck off the highway up a bypath which followed the glen of a brawling stream. I reckoned that I was still far ahead of any pursuit, and for that night might please myself. It was some hours since I had tasted food, and I was getting very hungry when I came to a herd's cottage set in a nook beside a waterfall. A brown-faced woman was standing by the door, and greeted me with the kindly shyness of moorland places. When I asked for a night's lodging she said I was welcome to the "bed in the loft," and very soon she set before me a hearty meal of ham and eggs, scones, and thick sweet milk. At the darkening her man came in from the hills, a lean giant, who in one step covered as much ground as three paces of ordinary mortals. They asked no questions, for they had the perfect breeding of all dwellers in the wilds, but I could see they set me down as a kind of dealer, and I took some trouble to confirm their view. I spoke a lot about cattle, of which my host knew little, and I picked up from him a good deal about the local Galloway markets, which I tucked away in my memory for future use. At ten I was nodding in my chair, and the "bed in the loft" received a weary man who never opened his eyes till five o'clock set the little homestead agoing once more.

They refused any payment, and by six I had breakfasted and was striding southwards again. My notion was to return to the railway line a station or two farther on than the place where I had alighted yesterday and to double back. I reckoned that was the safest way, for the police would naturally assume that I was always making farther from London in the direction of some western port. I thought I had still a good bit of a start, for, as I reasoned, it would take some hours to fix the blame on me, and several more to identify the fellow who got on board the train at St Pancras.

It was the same jolly, clear spring weather, and I simply could not contrive to feel care-

worn. Indeed I was in better spirits than I had been for months. Over a long ridge of moorland I took my road, skirting the side of a high hill which the herd had called Cairnsmore of Fleet. Nesting curlews and plovers were crying everywhere, and the links of green pasture by the streams were dotted with young lambs. All the slackness of the past months was slipping from my bones, and I stepped out like a four-year-old. By-and-by I came to a swell of moorland which dipped to the vale of a little river, and a mile away in the heather I saw the smoke of a train.

The station, when I reached it, proved to be ideal for my purpose. The moor surged up around it and left room only for the single line, the slender siding, a waiting-room, an office, the station-master's cottage, and a tiny yard of gooseberries and sweet-william. There seemed no road to it from anywhere, and to increase the desolation the waves of a tarn lapped on their grey granite beach half a mile away. I waited in the deep heather till I saw the smoke of an east-going train on the horizon. Then I approached the tiny booking-office and took a ticket for Dumfries.

The only occupants of the carriage were an old shepherd and his dog—a wall-eyed brute that I mistrusted. The man was asleep, and on the cushions beside him was that morning's *Scotsman*. Eagerly I seized on it, for I fancied it would tell me something.

There were two columns about the Portland Place murder, as it was called. My man Paddock had given the alarm and had the milkman arrested. Poor devil, it looked as if the latter had earned his sovereign hardly; but for me he had been cheap at the price, for he seemed to have occupied the police the better part of the day. In the stop-press news I found a further instalment of the story. The milkman had been released, I read, and the true criminal, about whose identity the police were reticent, was believed to have got away from London by one of the northern lines. There was a short note about me as the owner of the flat. I guessed the police had stuck that in, as a clumsy contrivance to persuade me that I was unsuspected.

There was nothing else in the paper, nothing about foreign politics or Karolides, or the things that had interested Scudder. I laid it down, and found that we were approaching the station at which I had got out yesterday. The potato-digging station-master had been gingered up into some activity, for the west-going train was waiting to let us pass, and from it had descended three men who were asking him questions. I supposed that they were the local police, who had been stirred up by Scotland Yard, and had traced me as far as this one-horse siding. Sitting well back in the shadow I watched

them carefully. One of them had a book, and took down notes. The old potato-digger seemed to have turned peevish, but the child who had collected my ticket was talking volubly. All the party looked out across the moor where the white road departed. I hoped they were going to take up my tracks there.

As we moved away from that station my companion woke up. He fixed me with a wandering glance, kicked his dog viciously, and inquired where he was. Clearly he was very drunk.

"That's what comes o' bein' a teetotaller," he observed in bitter regret.

I expressed my surprise that in him I should have met a Blue-ribbon stalwart.

"Ay, but I'm a strong teetotaller," he said pugnaciously. "I took the pledge last Martinmas, and I havena touched a drop o' whisky sinsyne. No even at Hogmanay, though I was sair temptit."

He swung his heels up on the seat, and burrowed a frowsy head into the cushions.

"And that's a' I get," he moaned. "A heid hetter than hell fire, and twae een lookin' different ways for Sunday."

"What did it?" I asked.

"A drink they ca' brandy. Bein' a teetotaller I keepit off the whisky, but I was nip-nippin' a' day at this brandy, and I doubt I'll no be weel for a fortnicht." His voice died away into a stutter, and sleep once more laid its heavy hand on him.

My plan had been to get out at some station down the line, but the train suddenly gave me a better chance, for it came to a standstill at the end of a culvert which spanned a brawling porter-coloured river. I looked out and saw that every carriage window was closed and no human figure appeared in the landscape. So I opened the door, and dropped quickly into the tangle of hazels which edged the line.

It would have been all right but for that infernal dog. Under the impression that I was decamping with its master's belongings, it started to bark, and all but got me by the trousers. This woke up the herd, who stood bawling at the carriage door in the belief that I had committed suicide. I crawled through the thicket, reached the edge of the stream, and in cover of the bushes put a hundred yards or so behind me. Then from my shelter I peered back, and saw the guard and several passengers gathered round the open carriage door and staring in my direction. I could not have made a more public departure if I had left with a bugler and a brass band.

Happily the drunken herd provided a diversion. He and his dog, which was attached by a rope to his waist, suddenly cascaded out of the carriage, landed on their heads on the track, and rolled some way down the bank towards the water. In the rescue which followed the dog bit somebody, for I could hear the sound of hard swearing. Presently they had forgotten me, and when

after a quarter of a mile's crawl I ventured to look back, the train had started again and was vanishing in the cutting.

I was in a wide semicircle of moorland, with the brown river as radius, and the high hills forming the northern circumference. There was not a sign or sound of a human being, only the plashing water and the interminable crying of curlews. Yet, oddly enough, for the first time I felt the terror of the hunted on me. It was not the police that I thought of, but the other folk, who knew that I knew Scudder's secret and dared not let me live. I was certain that they would pursue me with a keenness and vigilance unknown to the British law, and that once their grip closed on me I should find no mercy.

I looked back, but there was nothing in the landscape. The sun glinted on the metals of the line and the wet stones in the stream, and you could not have found a more peaceful sight in the world. Nevertheless I started to run. Crouching low in the runnels of the bog, I ran till the sweat blinded my eyes. The mood did not leave me till I had reached the rim of mountain and flung myself panting on a ridge high above the young waters of the brown river.

From my vantage-ground I could scan the whole moor right away to the railway line and to the south of it where green fields took the place of heather. I have eyes like a hawk, but I could see nothing moving in the whole countryside. Then I looked east beyond the ridge and saw a new kind of landscape — shallow green valleys with plentiful fir plantations and the faint lines of dust which spoke of high-roads. Last of all I looked into the blue May sky, and there I saw that which set my pulses racing. Low down in the south a monoplane was climbing into the heavens. I was as certain as if I had been told that that aeroplane was looking for me, and that it did not belong to the police. For an hour or two I watched it from a pit of heather. It flew low along the hill-tops, and then in narrow circles back over the valley up which I had come. Then it seemed to change its mind, rose to a great height, and flew away back to the south.

I did not like this espionage from the air, and I began to think less well of the countryside I had chosen for a refuge. These heather hills were no sort of cover if my enemies were in the sky, and I must find a different kind of sanctuary. I looked with more satisfaction to the green country beyond the ridge, for there I should find woods and stone houses.

About six in the evening I came out of the moorland to a white ribbon of road which wound up the narrow vale of a lowland stream. As I followed it, fields gave place to bent, the glen became a plateau, and presently I had reached a kind of pass, where a solitary house smoked in the twilight. The road swung over a bridge, and

leaning on the parapet was a young man.

He was smoking a long clay pipe and studying the water with spectacled eyes. In his left hand was a small book with a finger marking the place. Slowly he repeated—

"As when a Gryphon through the wilderness
With wingéd step, o'er hill and moory dale
Pursues the Arimaspian."

He jumped round as my step rung on the keystone, and I saw a pleasant sunburnt boyish face.

"Good evening to you," he said gravely. "It's a fine night for the road."

The smell of peat smoke and of some savoury roast floated to me from the house. "Is that place an inn?" I asked.

"At your service," he said politely. "I am the landlord, sir, and I hope you will stay the night, for to tell you the truth I have had no company for a week."

I pulled myself up on the parapet of the bridge and filled my pipe. I began to detect an ally.

"You're young to be an innkeeper," I said.

"My father died a year ago and left me the business. I live there with my grandmother. It's a slow job for a young man, and it wasn't my choice of profession."

"Which was?"

He actually blushed. "I want to write books," he said.

"And what better chance could you ask?" I cried. "Man, I've often thought that an innkeeper would make the best story-teller in the world."

"Not now," he said eagerly. "Maybe in the old days when you had pilgrims and ballad-makers and highwaymen and mail-coaches on the road. But not now. Nothing comes here but motor-cars full of fat women, who stop for lunch, and a fisherman or two in the spring, and the shooting tenants in August. There is not much material to be got out of that. I want to see life, to travel the world, and write things like Kipling and Conrad. But the most I've done yet is to get some verses printed in *Chambers's Journal*."

I looked at the inn standing golden in the sunset against the brown hills.

"I've knocked a bit about the world, and I wouldn't despise such a hermitage. D'you think that adventure is found only in the tropics or among gentry in red shirts? Maybe you're rubbing shoulders with it at this moment."

"That's what Kipling says," he said, his eyes brightening, and he quoted some verse about "Romance bringing up the 9.15."

"Here's a true tale for you then," I cried, "and a month from now you can make a novel out of it."

Sitting on the bridge in the soft May gloaming I pitched him a lovely yarn. It was true in essentials, too, though I altered the minor details. I made out that I was a mining magnate from Kimberley, who had had a lot of trouble with I.D.B. and had shown up a gang.

They had pursued me across the ocean, and had killed my best friend, and were now on my tracks.

I told the story well, though I say it who shouldn't. I pictured a flight across the Kalahari to German Africa, the crackling, parching days, the wonderful blue-velvet nights. I described an attack on my life on the voyage home, and I made a really horrid affair of the Portland Place murder. "You're looking for adventure," I cried; "well, you've found it here. The devils are after me, and the police are after them. It's a race that I mean to win."

"By God!" he whispered, drawing his breath in sharply, "it is all pure Rider Haggard and Conan Doyle."

"You believe me," I said gratefully.

"Of course I do," and he held out his hand. "I believe everything out of the common. The only thing to distrust is the normal."

He was very young, but he was the man for my money.

"I think they're off my track for the moment, but I must lie close for a couple of days. Can you take me in?"

He caught my elbow in his eagerness and drew me towards the house. "You can lie as snug here as if you were in a moss-hole. I'll see that nobody blabs, either. And you'll give me some more material about your adventures?"

As I entered the inn porch I heard from far off the beat of an engine. There silhouetted against the dusky West was my friend, the monoplane.

He gave me a room at the back of the house, with a fine outlook over the plateau, and he made me free of his own study, which was stacked with cheap editions of his favourite authors. I never saw the grandmother, so I guessed she was a bed-ridden. An old woman called Margit brought me my meals, and the innkeeper was around me at all hours. I wanted some time to myself, so I invented a job for him. He had a motor bicycle, and I sent him off next morning for the daily paper, which usually arrived with the post in the late afternoon. I told him to keep his eyes skinned, and make note of any strange figures he saw, keeping a special sharp look-out for motors and aeroplanes. Then I sat down in real earnest to Scudder's note-book.

He came back at midday with the *Scotsman*. There was nothing in it, except some further evidence of Paddock and the milkman, and a repetition of yesterday's statement that the murderer had gone North. But there was a long article, reprinted from the *Times*, about Karolides and the state of affairs in the Balkans, though there was no mention of any visit to England. I got rid of the innkeeper for the afternoon, for I was getting very warm in my search for the cypher.

As I told you, it was a numerical cypher, and by an elaborate system of experiments

I had pretty well discovered what were the nulls and stops. The trouble was the key word, and when I thought of the odd million words he might have used I felt pretty hopeless. But about three o'clock I had a sudden inspiration.

The name Julia Czechenyi flashed across my memory. Scudder had said it was the key to the Karolides business, and it occurred to me to try it on his cypher.

It worked. The five letters of "Julia" gave me the position of the vowels. A was J, the tenth letter of the alphabet, and so represented by X in the cypher. E was U = XXI and so on. "Czechenyi" gave me the numerals for the principal consonants. I scribbled that scheme on a bit of paper and sat down to read Scudder's pages.

In half an hour I was reading with a whitish face and fingers that drummed on the table. I glanced out of the window and saw a big touring-car coming up the glen towards the inn. It drew up at the door, and there was the sound of people alighting. There seemed to be two of them, men in aquascutums and tweed caps.

Ten minutes later the innkeeper slipped into the room, his eyes bright with excitement.

"There's two chaps below looking for you," he whispered. "They're in the dining-room having whiskys and sodas. They asked about you and said they had hoped to meet you here. Oh! and they described you jolly well, down to your boots and shirt. I told them you had been here last night and had gone off on a motor bicycle this morning, and one of the chaps swore like a navvy."

I made him tell me what they looked like. One was a dark-eyed thin fellow with bushy eyebrows, the other was always smiling and lisped in his talk. Neither was any kind of foreigner; on this my young friend was positive.

I took a bit of paper and wrote these words in German as if they were part of a letter:—

. . . "Black Stone. Scudder had got on to this, but he could not act for a fortnight. I doubt if I can do any good now, especially as Karolides is uncertain about his plans. But if Mr T. advises I will do the best I . . ."

I manufactured it rather neatly, so that it looked like a loose page of a private letter.

"Take this down and say it was found in my bedroom, and ask them to return it to me if they overtake me."

Three minutes later I heard the car begin to move, and peeping from behind the curtain caught sight of the two figures. One was slim, the other was sleek; that was the most I could make of my reconnaissance.

The innkeeper appeared in great excitement. "Your paper woke them up," he said gleefully. "The dark fellow went as white as death and cursed like blazes, and the fat

one whistled and looked ugly. They paid for their drinks with half-a-sovereign and wouldn't wait for change."

"Now I'll tell you what I want you to do," I said. "Get on your bicycle and go off to Newton-Stewart to the Chief Constable. Describe the two men, and say you suspect them of having had something to do with the London murder. You can invent reasons. The two will come back, never fear. Not to-night, for they'll follow me forty miles along the road, but first thing to-morrow morning. Tell the police to be here bright and early."

He set off like a docile child, while I worked at Scudder's notes. When he came back we dined together, and in common decency I had to let him pump me. I gave him a lot of stuff about lion hunts and the Matabele War, thinking all the while what tame businesses these were compared to this I was now engaged in. When he went to bed I sat up and finished Scudder. I smoked in a chair till daylight, for I could not sleep.

About eight next morning I witnessed the arrival of two constables and a sergeant. They put their car in a coach-house under the innkeeper's instructions, and entered the house. Twenty minutes later I saw from my window a second car come across the plateau from the opposite direction. It did not come up to the inn, but stopped two hundred yards off in the shelter of a patch of wood. I noticed that its occupants carefully reversed it before leaving it. A minute or two later I heard their steps on the gravel outside the window.

My plan had been to lie hid in my bedroom, and see what happened. I had a notion that, if I could bring the police and my other more dangerous pursuers together, something might work out of it to my advantage. But now I had a better idea. I scribbled a line of thanks to my host, opened the window, and dropped quietly into a gooseberry bush. Unobserved I crossed the dyke, crawled down the side of a tributary burn, and won the highroad on the far side of the patch of trees. There stood the car, very spick and span in the morning sunlight, but with the dust on her which told of a long journey. I started her, jumped into the chauffeur's seat, and stole gently out on to the plateau. Almost at once the road dipped so that I lost sight of the inn, but the wind seemed to bring me the sound of angry voices.

CHAPTER IV.—THE ADVENTURE OF THE RADICAL CANDIDATE.

You may picture me driving that 40 h.p. car for all she was worth over the crisp moor roads on that shining May morning; glancing back at first over my shoulder, and looking anxiously to the next turning; then driving with a

vague eye, just wide enough awake to keep on the highway. For I was thinking desperately of what I had found in Scudder's pocket-book.

The little man had told me a pack of lies. All his yarns about the Balkans and the Jew-Anarchists and the Foreign Office Conference were eyewash, and so was Karolides. And yet not quite, as you shall hear. I had staked everything on my belief in his story, and had been let down; here was his book telling me a different tale, and instead of being once-bit-twice-shy, I believed it absolutely. Why, I don't know. It rang desperately true, and the first yarn, if you understand me, had been in a queer way true also in spirit. The fifteenth day of June was going to be a day of destiny, a bigger destiny than the killing of a Dago. It was so big that I didn't blame Scudder for keeping me out of the game and wanting to play a lone hand. That, I was pretty clear, was his intention. He had told me something which sounded big enough, but the real thing was so immortally big that he, the man who had found it out, wanted it all for himself. I didn't blame him. It was risks after all that he was chiefly greedy about.

The whole story was in the notes—with gaps, you understand, which he would have filled up from his memory. He stuck down his authorities, too, and had an odd trick of giving them all a numerical value and then striking a balance, which stood for the reliability of each stage in the yarn. The four names he had printed were authorities, and there was a man, Ducrosne, who got five out of a possible five; and another fellow, Ammersfoort, who got three. The bare bones of the tale were all that was in the book—these, and one queer phrase which occurred half a dozen times inside brackets. ("Thirty-nine steps") was the phrase; and at its last time of use it ran—("Thirty-nine steps, I counted them—high tide 10.17 P.M.") I could make nothing of that.

The first thing I learned was that it was no question of preventing a war. That was coming, as sure as Christmas: had been arranged, said Scudder, ever since February 1912. Karolides was going to be the occasion. He was booked all right, and was to hand in his checks on June 14th, two weeks and four days from that May morning. I gathered from Scudder's notes that nothing on earth could prevent that. His talk of Epirote guards that would skin their own grandmothers was all billy-O.

The second thing was that this war was going to come as a mighty surprise to Britain. Karolides' death would set the Balkans by the ears, and then Vienna would chip in with an ultimatum. Russia wouldn't like that, and there would be high words. But Berlin would play the peacemaker, and pour oil on the waters,

till suddenly she would find a good cause for a quarrel, pick it up, and in five hours let fly at us. That was the idea, and a pretty good one too. Honey and fair speeches, and then a stroke in the dark. While we were talking about the good-will and good intentions of Germany our coast would be silently ringed with mines, and submarines would be waiting for every battleship.

But all this depended upon the third thing, which was due to happen on June 15th. I would never have grasped this if I hadn't once happened to meet a French staff officer, coming back from West Africa, who had told me a lot of things. One was that, in spite of all the nonsense talked in Parliament, there was a real working alliance between France and Britain, and that the two General Staffs met every now and then, and made plans for joint action in case of war. Well, in June a very great swell was coming over from Paris, and he was going to get nothing less than a statement of the disposition of the British Home Fleet on mobilisation. At least I gathered it was something like that; anyhow, it was something uncommonly important. But on the 15th day of June there were to be others in London — others, at whom I could only guess. Scudder was content to call them collectively the "Black Stone." They represented not our Allies, but our deadly foes; and the information, destined for France, was to be diverted to their pockets. And it was to be used, remember—used a week or two later, with great guns and swift torpedoes, suddenly in the darkness of a summer night.

This was the story I had been deciphering in a back-room of a country inn, overlooking a cabbage garden. This was the story that hummed in my brain as I swung in the big touring-car from glen to glen.

My first impulse had been to write a letter to the Prime Minister, but a little reflection convinced me that that would be useless. Who would believe my tale? I must show a sign, some token in proof, and Heaven knew what that could be. Above all, I must keep going myself, ready to act when things got riper, and that was going to be no light job with the police of the British Isles in full cry after me and the watchers of the Black Stone running silently and swiftly on my trail.

I had no very clear purpose in my journey, but I steered east by the sun, for I remembered from the map that if I went north I would come into a region of coal-pits and industrial towns. Presently I was down from the moorlands and traversing the broad haugh of a river. For miles I ran alongside a park wall, and in a break of the trees I saw a great castle. I swung through little old thatched villages, and over peaceful lowland streams, and past gardens blazing with hawthorn and yellow labur-

num. The land was so deep in peace that I could scarcely believe that somewhere behind me were those who sought my life; ay, and that in a month's time, unless I had the almightiest of luck, these round country faces would be pinched and staring, and men would be lying dead in English fields.

About midday I entered a long straggling village, and had a mind to stop and eat. Half-way down was the Post Office, and on the steps of it stood the post-mistress and a policeman hard at work conning a telegram. When they saw me they wakened up, and the policeman advanced with raised hand, and cried on me to stop.

I nearly was fool enough to obey. Then it flashed upon me that the wire had to do with me; that my friends at the inn had come to an understanding, and were united in desiring to see more of me, and that it had been easy enough for them to wire the description of me and the car to thirty villages through which I might pass. I released the brakes just in time. As it was, the policeman made a claw at the hood, and only dropped off when he got my left in his eye.

I saw that main roads were no place for me, and turned into the by-ways. It wasn't an easy job without a map, for there was the risk of getting on to a farm road and ending in a duck-pond or a stable-yard, and I couldn't afford that kind of delay. I began to see what an ass I had been to steal the car. The big green brute would be the safest kind of clue to me over the breadth of Scotland. If I left it and took to my feet, it would be discovered in an hour or two and I would get no start in the race.

The immediate thing to do was to get to the loneliest roads. These I soon found when I struck up a tributary of the big river, and got into a glen with steep hills all about me, and a corkscrew road at the end which climbed over a pass. Here I met nobody, but it was taking me too far north, so I slewed east along a bad track and finally struck a big double-line railway. Away below me I saw another broadish valley, and it occurred to me that if I crossed it I might find some remote inn to pass the night. The evening was now drawing in, and I was furiously hungry, for I had eaten nothing since breakfast except a couple of buns I had bought from a baker's cart.

Just then I heard a noise in the sky, and lo and behold there was that infernal aeroplane, flying low, about a dozen miles to the south and rapidly coming towards me.

I had the sense to remember that on a bare moor I was at the aeroplane's mercy, and that my only chance was to get to the leafy cover of the valley. Down the hill I went like blue lightning, screwing my head round whenever I dared, to watch that damned flying machine. Soon I was on a road between hedges, and dipping to

the deep-cut glen of a stream. Then came a bit of thick wood where I slackened speed.

Suddenly on my left I heard the hoot of another car, and realised to my horror that I was almost up on a couple of gate-posts through which a private road debouched on the highway. My horn gave an agonised roar, but it was too late. I clapped on my brakes, but my impetus was too great, and there before me a car was sliding athwart my course. In a second there would have been the deuce of a wreck. I did the only thing possible, and ran slap into the hedge on the right, trusting to find something soft beyond.

But there I was mistaken. My car slithered through the hedge like butter, and then gave a sickening plunge forward. I saw what was coming, leapt on the seat and would have jumped out. But a branch of hawthorn got me in the chest, lifted me up and held me, while a ton or two of expensive metal slipped below me, bucked and pitched, and then dropped with an almighty smash fifty feet to the bed of the stream.

Slowly that thorn let me go. I subsided first on the hedge, and then very gently on a bower of nettles. As I scrambled to my feet a hand took me by the arm, and a sympathetic and badly scared voice asked me if I were hurt. I found myself looking at a tall young man in goggles and a leather ulster, who kept on blessing his soul and whinnying apologies. For myself, once I got my wind back, I was rather glad than otherwise. This was one way of getting rid of the car.

"My blame, sir," I answered him. "It's lucky that I did not add homicide to my follies. That's the end of my Scotch motor tour, but it might have been the end of my life."

He plucked out a watch and studied it. "You're the right sort of fellow," he said. "I can spare a quarter of an hour, and my house is two minutes off. I'll see you clothed and fed and snug in bed. Where's you're kit, by the way? Is it in the burn along with the car?"

"It's in my pocket," I said, brandishing a tooth-brush. "I'm a colonial and travel light."

"A colonial," he cried. "By Gad, you're the very man I've been praying for. Are you by any blessed chance a Free Trader?"

"I am," said I, without the foggiest notion of what he meant.

He patted my shoulder and hurried me into his car. Three minutes later we drew up before a comfortable-looking shooting-box set among pine trees, and he ushered me indoors. He took me first to a bedroom and flung half a dozen of his suits before me, for my own had been pretty well reduced to rags. I selected a loose blue serge, which differed most conspicuously from my own garments, and borrowed a linen collar. Then he haled me to the dining-room, where the remnants of a meal stood on

the table, and announced that I had just five minutes to feed. "You can take a snack in your pocket, and we'll have supper when we get back. I've got to be at the Masonic Hall at eight o'clock or my agent will comb my hair."

I had a cup of coffee and some cold ham, while he yarned away on the hearth-rug.

"You find me in the deuce of a mess, Mr ——; by-the-by, you haven't told me your name. Twisdon? Any relation of old Tommy Twisdon of the Sixtieth? No? Well, you see I'm Liberal Candidate for this part of the world, and I had a meeting on to-night at Brattleburn —that's my chief town, and an infernal Tory stronghold. I had got the Colonial ex-Premier fellow, Crumpleton, coming to speak for me to-night, and had the thing tremendously billed and the whole place ground-baited. This afternoon I had a wire from the ruffian saying he had got influenza at Blackpool, and here am I left to do the whole thing myself. I had meant to speak for ten minutes and must now go on for forty, and, though I've been racking my brains for three hours to think of something, I simply cannot last the course. Now you've got to be a good chap and help me. You're a Free Trader and can tell our people what a wash-out Protection is in the Colonies. All you fellows have the gift of the gab—I wish to heaven I had it. I'll be for evermore in your debt."

I had very few notions about Free Trade one way or the other, but I saw no other chance to get what I wanted. My young gentleman was far too absorbed in his own difficulties to think how odd it was to ask a stranger who had just missed death by an ace and had lost a 1000-guinea car to address a meeting for him on the spur of the moment. But my necessities did not allow me to contemplate oddnesses or to pick and choose my supports.

"All right," I said. "I'm not much good as a speaker, but I'll tell them a bit about Australia."

At my words the cares of the ages slipped from his shoulders, and he was rapturous in his thanks. He lent me a big driving coat — and never troubled to ask why I had started on a motor tour without possessing an ulster—and as we slipped down the dusty roads, poured into my ears the simple facts of his history. He was an orphan, and his uncle had brought him up—I've forgotten the uncle's name, but he was in the Cabinet, and you can read his speeches in the papers. He had gone round the world after leaving Cambridge, and then, being short of a job, his uncle had advised politics. I gathered that he had no preference in parties. "Good chaps in both," he said cheerfully, "and plenty of blighters, too. I'm Liberal, because my family have always been Whigs." But if he was lukewarm politically he had strong views on other things. He found out I knew a bit about horses, and jawed away about the Derby entries; and he was full of plans for

improving his shooting. Altogether, a very clean, decent, callow young man.

As we passed through a little town two policemen signalled us to stop, and flashed their lanterns on us. "Beg pardon, Sir Harry," said one. "We've got instructions to look out for a car, and the description's no unlike yours."

"Right-O," said my host, while I thanked Providence for the devious ways I had been brought to safety. After that we spoke no more, for my host's mind began to labour heavily with his coming speech. His lips kept muttering, his eye wandered, and I began to prepare myself for a second catastrophe. I tried to think of something to say myself, but my mind was dry as a stone. The next thing I knew we had drawn up outside a door in a street, and were being welcomed by some noisy gentlemen with rosettes.

The hall had about five hundred in it, women mostly, a lot of bald heads, and a dozen or two young men. The chairman, a weaselly minister with a reddish nose, lamented Crumpleton's absence, soliloquised on his influenza, and gave me a certificate as a "trusted leader of Australian thought." There were two policemen at the door, and I hoped they took note of that testimonial. Then Sir Harry started.

I never heard anything like it. He didn't begin to know how to talk. He had about a bushel of notes from which he read, and when he let go of them he fell into one prolonged stutter. Every now and then he remembered a phrase he had learned by heart, straightened his back, and gave it off like Henry Irving, and the next moment he was bent double and crooning over his papers. It was the most appalling rot, too. He talked about the "German menace," and said it was all a Tory invention to cheat the poor of their rights and keep back the great flood of social reform, but that "organised labour" realised this and laughed the Tories to scorn. He was all for reducing our Navy as a proof of our good faith, and then sending Germany an ultimatum telling her to do the same or we would knock her into a cocked hat. He said that, but for the Tories, Germany and Britain would be fellow-workers in peace and reform. I thought of the little black book in my pocket! A giddy lot Scudder's friends cared for peace and reform.

Yet in a queer way I liked the speech. You could see the niceness of the chap shining out behind the muck with which he had been spoon-fed. Also it took a load off my mind. I mightn't be much of an orator, but I was a thousand per cent better that Sir Harry. I didn't get on so badly when it came to my turn. I simply told them all I could remember about Australia, praying there should be no Australian there—all about its labour party and emigration and universal service. I doubt if I remembered to mention Free Trade, but I said

there were no Tories in Australia, only Labour and Liberals. That fetched a cheer, and I woke them up a bit when I started in to tell them the kind of glorious business I thought could be made out of the Empire if we really put our backs into it.

Altogether I fancy I was rather a success. The minister didn't like me, though, and when he proposed a vote of thanks spoke of Sir Harry's speech as "statesmanlike" and mine as having "the eloquence of an emigration agent."

When we were in the car again my host was in wild spirits at having got his job over. "A ripping speech, Twisdon," he said. "Now, you're coming home with me. I'm all alone, and if you'll stop a day or two I'll show you some very decent fishing."

We had a hot supper—and I wanted it pretty badly—and then drank grog in a big cheery smoking-room with a crackling wood fire. I thought the time had come for me to put my cards on the table. I saw by this man's eye that he was the kind you can trust.

"Listen, Sir Harry," I said. "I've something pretty important to say to you. You're a good fellow, and I'm going to be frank. Where on earth did you get that poisonous rubbish you talked to-night?"

His face fell. "Was it as bad as that?" he asked ruefully. "It did sound rather thin. I got most of it out of the *Progressive Magazine* and pamphlets that agent chap of mine keeps sending me. But you surely don't think Germany would ever go to war with us?"

"Ask that question in six weeks and it won't need an answer," I said. "If you'll give me your attention for half an hour I am going to tell you a story."

I can see yet that bright room with the deers' heads and the old prints on the walls, Sir Harry standing restlessly on the stone curb of the hearth, and myself lying back in an arm-chair, speaking. I seemed to be another person, standing aside and listening to my own voice, and judging carefully the reliability of my tale. It was the first time I had ever told any one the exact truth, so far as I understood it, and it did me no end of good, for it straightened out the thing in my own mind. I blinked no detail. He heard all about Scudder, and the milkman, and the note-book, and my doings in Galloway. Presently he got very excited and walked up and down the hearth-rug.

"So you see," I concluded, "you have got here in your house the man that is wanted for the Portland Place murder. Your duty is to send your car for the police and give me up. I don't think I'll get very far. There'll be an accident, and I'll have a knife in my ribs an hour or so after arrest. Nevertheless it's your duty, as a law-abiding citizen. Perhaps in a month's time you'll be sorry, but you have no cause to think of that."

He was looking at me with bright steady eyes. "What was your job in Rhodesia, Mr Hannay?" he asked.

"Mining engineer," I said. "I've made my pile cleanly and I've had a good time in the making of it."

"Not a profession that weakens the nerves, is it?"

I laughed. "Oh, as to that, my nerves are good enough." I took down a hunting-knife from a stand on the wall, and did the old Mashona trick of tossing it and catching it in my lips. That wants a pretty steady heart.

He watched me with a smile. "I don't want proofs. I may be an ass on the platform, but I can size up a man. You're no murderer and you're no fool, and I believe you are speaking the truth. I'm going to back you up. Now, what can I do?"

"First, I want you to write a letter to your uncle. I've got to get in touch with the Government people sometime before the 15th of June."

He pulled his moustache. "That won't help you. This is Foreign Office business, and my uncle would have nothing to do with it. Besides, you'd never convince him. No, I'll go one better. I'll write to the Permanent Secretary at the Foreign Office. He's my godfather, and one of the best going. What do you want?"

He sat down at a table and wrote to my dictation. The gist of it was that if a man called Twisdon (I thought I had better stick to that name) turned up before June 15th he was to entreat him kindly. He said Twisdon would prove his *bona fides* by passing the word "Black Stone" and whistling "Annie Laurie."

"Good," said Sir Harry. "That's the proper style. By the way, you'll find my godfather—his name's Sir Walter Bullivant—down at his country cottage for Whitsuntide. It's close to Artinswell on the Kennet. That's done. Now, what's the next thing?"

"You're about my height. Lend me the oldest tweed suit you've got. Anything will do, so long as the colour is the opposite of the clothes I destroyed this afternoon. Then show me a map of the neighbourhood and explain to me the lie of the land. Lastly, if the police come seeking me, just show them the car in the glen. If the other lot turn up, tell them I caught the south express after your meeting."

He did, or promised to do, all these things. I shaved off the remnants of my moustache, and got inside an ancient suit of what I believe is called heather mixture. The map gave me some notion of my whereabouts, and told me the two things I wanted to know—where the main railway to the south could be joined and what were the wildest districts near at hand.

At two o'clock he wakened me from my slumbers in the smoking-room arm-chair, and led me blinking into the dark starry night. An old bicycle was found in a toolshed and handed over to me.

"First turn to the right up by the long fir-wood," he enjoined. "By daybreak you'll be well into the hills. Then I should pitch the machine into a bog and take to the moors on foot. You can put in a week among the shepherds, and

be as safe as if you were in New Guinea."

I pedalled diligently up steep roads of hill gravel till the skies grew pale with morning. As the mists cleared before the sun, I found myself in a wide green world with glens falling on every side and a far-away blue horizon. Here, at any rate, I could get early news of my enemies.

CHAPTER V.—THE ADVENTURE OF THE SPECTACLED ROADMAN.

I sat down on the very crest of the pass and took stock of my position. Behind me was the road climbing through a long cleft in the hills, which was the upper glen of some notable river. In front was a flat space of maybe a mile, all pitted with bog-holes and rough with tussocks, and then beyond it the road fell steeply down another glen to a plain whose blue dimness melted into the distance. To left and right were round-shouldered green hills as smooth as pancakes, but to the south —that is, the left hand—there was a glimpse of high heathery mountains, which I remembered from the map as the big knot of hill which I had chosen for my sanctuary. I was on the central boss of a huge upland country, and could see everything moving for miles. In the meadows below the road half a mile back a cottage smoked, but it was the only sign of human life. Otherwise there was only the calling of plovers and the tinkling of little streams.

It was now about seven o'clock, and as I waited I heard once again that ominous beat in the air. Then I realised that my vantage-ground might be in reality a trap. There was no cover for a tomtit in those bald green places.

I sat quite still and hopeless while the beat grew louder. Then I saw an aeroplane coming up from the east. It was flying high, but as I looked it dropped several hundred feet and began to circle round the knot of hill in narrowing circles, just as a hawk wheels before it pounces. Now it was flying very low, and now the observer on board caught sight of me. I could see one of the two occupants examining me through glasses. Suddenly it began to rise in swift whorls, and the next I knew it was speeding eastward again till it became a speck in the blue morning.

That made me do some savage thinking. My enemies had located me, and the next thing would be a cordon round me. I didn't know what force they could command, but I was certain it would be sufficient. The aeroplane had seen my bicycle, and would conclude that I would try to escape by the road. In that case there might be a chance on the moors to the right or left. I wheeled the machine a hundred yards from the highway, and plunged it into a moss-hole where it sank among pond-

weed and water-buttercups. Then I climbed to a knoll which gave me a view of the two valleys. Nothing was stirring on the long white ribbon that threaded them.

I have said there was not cover in the whole place to hide a rat. As the day advanced it was flooded with soft fresh light till it had the fragrant sunniness of the South African veld. At other times I should have liked the place, but now it seemed to suffocate me. The free moorlands were prison walls, and the keen hill air was the breath of a dungeon.

I tossed a coin—heads right, tails left—and it fell heads, so I turned to the north. In a little I came to the brow of the ridge which was the containing wall of the pass. I saw the highroad for maybe ten miles, and far down it something that was moving, and that I took to be a motor-car. Beyond the ridge I looked on a rolling green moor, which fell away into wooded glens. Now my life on the veld has given me the eyes of a kite, and I can see things for which most men need a telescope. Away down the slope, a couple of miles away, several men were advancing like a row of beaters at a shoot.

I dropped out of sight behind the skyline. That way was shut to me, and I must try the bigger hills to the south beyond the highway. The car I had noticed was getting nearer, but it was still a long way off with some very steep gradients before it. I ran hard, crouching low except in the hollows, and as I ran I kept scanning the brow of the hill before me. Was it imagination, or did I see figures—one, two, perhaps more—moving in a glen beyond the stream?

If you are hemmed in on all sides in a patch of land there is only one chance of escape. You must stay in the patch, and let your enemies search it and not find you. That was good sense, but how on earth was I to escape notice in that table-cloth of a place? I would have buried myself to the neck in mud or lain below water or climbed the tallest tree. But there was not a stick of wood, the bog-holes were little puddles, the stream was a slender trickle. There was nothing but short heather, and bare hill bent, and the white highway.

Then in a tiny bight of road, beside a heap of stones, I found the Roadman.

He had just arrived, and was wearily flinging down his hammer. He looked at me with a fishy eye and yawned.

"Confoond the day I ever left the herdin'!" he said, as if to the world at large. "There I was my ain maister. Now I'm a slave to the Government, tethered to the roadside, wi' sair een, and a back like a suckle." He took up the hammer, struck a stone, dropped the implement with an oath, and put both hands to his ears. "Mercy on me! My heid's burstin'!" he cried.

He was a wild figure, about my own size but much bent, with a week's beard on his chin, and a pair of big horn spectacles.

"I canna dae't," he cried again. "The Surveyor maun just report me. I'm for my bed."

I asked him what was the trouble, though indeed that was clear enough.

"The trouble is that I'm no sober. Last nicht my dochter Merran was waddit, and they danced till fower in the byre. Me and some ither chiels sat down to the drinkin', and here I am. Peety that I ever lookit on the wine when it was red!"

I agreed with him about bed.

"It's easy speakin'," he moaned. "But I got a post-caird yestereen sayin' that the new Road Surveyor would be round the day. He'll come and he'll no find me, or else he'll find me fou, and either way I'm a done man. I'll awa' back to my bed and say I'm no weel, but I doot that'll no help me, for they ken my kind o' no-weel-ness."

Then I had an inspiration. "Does the new Surveyor know you?" I asked.

"No him. He's just been a week at the job. He rins about in a wee motor-car, and wad speir the inside oot o' a whelk."

"Where's your house?" I asked, and was directed by a wavering finger to the cottage by the stream.

"Well, back to your bed," I said, "and sleep in peace. I'll take on your job for a bit and see the Surveyor."

He stared at me blankly; then, as the notion dawned on his fuddled brain, his face broke into the vacant drunkard's smile.

"You're the billy," he cried. "It'll be easy eneuch managed. I've finished that bing o' stanes, so you needna chap ony mair this forenoon. Just take the barry, and wheel eneuch metal frae yon quarry doon the road to mak another bing the morn. My name's Alexander Trummle, and I've been seeven year at the trade, and twenty afore that herdin' on Leithen Water. My freends ca' me Ecky, and whiles Specky, for I wear glesses, being weak i' the sicht. Just you speak the Surveyor fair, and ca' him Sir, and he'll be fell pleased. I'll be back or midday."

I borrowed his spectacles and filthy old hat; stripped off coat, waistcoat, and collar, and gave him them to carry home; borrowed, too, the foul stump of a clay pipe as an extra property. He indicated my simple tasks, and without more ado set off at an amble bedwards. Bed may have been his chief object, but I think there was also something left in the foot of a bottle. I prayed that he might be safe under cover before my friends arrived on the scene.

Then I set to work to dress for the part. I opened the collar of my shirt—it was a vulgar blue-and-white check such as ploughmen wear — and revealed a neck as brown as any tinker's. I rolled up my sleeves, and there was a forearm which might have been a blacksmith's, sunburnt and rough with old scars. I got my boots and trouser-legs all white from the dust of the road, and hitched up my trousers, tying them with string below the knee. Then I set to work on my face. With a handful of dust I made a water-mark

round my neck, the place where Mr Turnbull's Sunday ablutions might be expected to stop. I rubbed a good deal of dirt also into the sunburn of my cheeks. A roadman's eyes would no doubt be a little inflamed, so I contrived to get some dust in both of mine, and by dint of vigorous rubbing produced a bleary effect.

The sandwiches Sir Harry had given me had gone off with my coat, but the roadman's lunch, tied up in a red handkerchief, was at my disposal. I ate with great relish several of the thick slabs of scone and cheese and drank a little of the cold tea. In the handkerchief was a local paper tied with string and addressed to Mr Turnbull — obviously meant to solace his midday leisure. I did up the bundle again, and put the paper conspicuously beside it.

My boots did not satisfy me, but by dint of kicking among the stones I reduced them to the granite-like surface which marks a roadman's foot-gear. Then I bit and scraped my finger-nails till the edges were all cracked and uneven. The men I was matched against would miss no detail. I broke one of the bootlaces and retied it in a clumsy knot, and loosed the other so that my thick grey socks bulged over the uppers. Still no sign of anything on the road. The motor I had observed half an hour ago must have gone home.

My toilet complete, I took up the barrow and began my journeys to and from the quarry a hundred yards off. I remember an old scout in Rhodesia, who had done many queer things in his day, once telling me that the secret of playing a part was to think yourself into it. You could never keep it up, he said, unless you could manage to convince yourself that you were *it*. So I shut off all other thoughts and switched them on to the road-mending. I thought of the little white cottage as my home, I recalled the years I had spent herding on Leithen Water, I made my mind dwell lovingly on sleep in a box-bed and a bottle of cheap whisky. Still nothing appeared on that long white road.

Now and then a sheep wandered off the heather to stare at me. A heron flopped down to a pool in the stream and started to fish, taking no more notice of me than if I had been a milestone. On I went, trundling my loads of stone, with the heavy step of the professional. Soon I grew warm, and the dust on my face changed into solid and abiding grit. I was already counting the hours till evening should put a limit to Mr Turnbull's monotonous toil.

Suddenly a crisp voice spoke from the road, and looking up I saw a little Ford two-seater, and a round-faced young man in a bowler hat.

"Are you Alexander Turnbull?" he asked. "I am the new County Road Surveyor. You live at Blackhopefoot, and have charge of the section from Laidlawbyres to the Riggs? Good! A fair bit of road, Turnbull, and not badly engineered. A little soft about a mile off, and the edges want

cleaning. See you look after that. Good-morning. You'll know me the next time you see me."

Clearly my get-up was good enough for the dreaded Surveyor. I went on with my work, and as the morning grew towards noon I was cheered by a little traffic. A baker's van breasted the hill, and sold me a bag of ginger biscuits which I stowed in my trouser-pockets against emergencies. Then a herd passed with sheep, and disturbed me somewhat by asking loudly, "What had become o' Specky?"

"In bed wi' the colic," I replied, and the herd passed on.

Just about midday a big car stole down the hill, glided past and drew up a hundred yards beyond. Its three occupants descended as if to stretch their legs, and sauntered towards me.

Two of the men I had seen before from the window of the Galloway inn—one lean, sharp, and dark, the other comfortable and smiling. The third had the look of a countryman—a vet, perhaps, or a small farmer. He was dressed in ill-cut knickerbockers, and the eye in his head was as bright and wary as a hen's.

"'Morning," said the last. "That's a fine easy job o' yours."

I had not looked up on their approach, and now, when accosted, I slowly and painfully straightened my back, after the manner of roadmen; spat vigorously, after the manner of the low Scot; and regarded them steadily before replying. I confronted three pairs of eyes that missed nothing.

"There's waur jobs and there's better," I said sententiously. "I wad rather hae yours, sittin' a' day on your hinderlands on thae cushions. It's you and your muckle cawrs that wreck my roads! If we a' had oor richts, you sud be made to mend what ye break."

The bright-eyed man was looking at the newspaper lying beside Turnbull's bundle.

"I see you get your papers in good time," he said.

I glanced at it casually. "Aye, in gude time. Seein' that that paper cam out last Setterday I'm just fower days late."

He picked it up, glanced at the superscription, and laid it down again. One of the others had been looking at my boots, and a word in German called the speaker's attention to them.

"You've a fine taste in boots," he said. "These were never made by a country shoemaker."

"They were not," I said readily. "They were made in London. I got them frae the gentleman that was here last year for the shootin'. What was his name now?" And I scratched a forgetful head.

Again the sleek one spoke in German. "Let us get on," he said. "This fellow is all right."

They asked one last question.

"Did you see any one pass early this morning? He might be on a bicycle or he might be on foot."

I very nearly fell into the trap and told a story of a bicyclist hurrying past in the

grey dawn. But I had the sense to see my danger. I pretended to consider very deeply.

"I wasna up very early," I said. "Ye see my dochter was merrit last nicht, and we keepit it up late. I opened the house door about seeven and there was naebody on the road then. Since I cam' up here there has been just the baker and the Ruchill herd, besides you gentlemen."

One of them gave me a cigar, which I smelt gingerly and stuck in Turnbull's bundle. They got into their car and were out of sight in three minutes.

My heart leaped with an enormous relief, but I went on wheeling my stones. It was as well, for ten minutes later the car returned, one of the occupants waving a hand to me. These gentry left nothing to chance.

I finished Turnbull's bread and cheese, and pretty soon I had finished the stones. The next step was what puzzled me. I could not keep up this road-making business for long. A merciful Providence had kept Mr Turnbull indoors, but if he appeared on the scene there would be trouble. I had a notion that the cordon was still tight round the glen, and that if I walked in any direction I should meet with questioners. But get out I must. No man's nerve could stand more than a day of being spied on.

I stayed at my post till about five o'clock. By that time I had resolved to go down to Turnbull's cottage at nightfall and take my chance of getting over the hills in the darkness. But suddenly a new car came up the road, and slowed down a yard or two from me. A fresh wind had risen, and the occupant wanted to light a cigarette.

It was a touring car, with the tonneau full of an assortment of baggage. One man sat in it, and by an amazing chance I knew him. His name was Marmaduke Mark-Brown, and he was an offence to creation. He was a sort of blood stockbroker, who did his business by toadying eldest sons and rich young peers and foolish old ladies. "Marmie" was a familiar figure, I understood, at balls and polo-weeks and country houses. He was an adroit scandal-monger, and would crawl a mile on his belly to anything that had a title or a million. I had a business introduction to his firm when I came to London, and he was good enough to ask me to dinner at his club. There he showed off at a great rate, and pattered about his duchesses till the snobbery of the creature turned me sick. I asked a man afterwards why nobody kicked him, and was told that Englishmen reverenced the weaker sex.

Anyhow there he was now, nattily dressed, in a fine new car, obviously on his way to visit some of his smart friends. A sudden daftness took me, and in a second I had jumped into the tonneau and had him by the shoulder.

"Hullo, Brown," I sang out. "Well met, my lad!"

He got a horrid fright. His

chin dropped as he stared at me. "Who the devil are you?" he gasped.

"My name's Hannay," I said. "From Rhodesia, you remember."

"Good God, the murderer!" he choked.

"Just so. And there'll be a second murder, my dear, if you don't do as I tell you. Give me that coat of yours. That cap, too."

He did as he was bid, for he was blind with terror. Over my dirty trousers and vulgar shirt I put on his smart driving-coat, which buttoned high at the top and thereby hid the deficiencies of my collar. I stuck the cap on my head, and added his gloves to my get up. The dusty roadman in a minute was transformed into one of the neatest motorists in Scotland. On Mr Mark-Brown's head I clapped Turnbull's unspeakable hat, and told him to keep it there.

Then with some difficulty I turned the car. My plan was to go back the road he had come, for the watchers, having seen it before, would probably let it pass unremarked, and Marmie's figure was in no way like mine.

"Now, my child," I said, "sit quite still and be a good boy. I mean you no harm. I'm only borrowing your car for an hour or two. But if you play me any tricks, and above all if you open your mouth, as sure as there's a God above me I'll wring your neck. *Savez?*"

I enjoyed that evening's ride. We ran eight miles down the valley, through a village or two, and I could not help noticing several strange-looking folk lounging by the roadside. These were the watchers who would have had much to say to me if I had come in other garb or company. As it was, they looked incuriously on. One touched his cap in salute, and I responded graciously.

As the dark fell I turned up a side glen which, as I remembered from the map, led into an unfrequented corner of the hills. Soon the villages were left behind, then the farms, and then even the wayside cottages. Presently we came to a lonely moor where the night was blackening the sunset gleam in the bog pools. Here we stopped, and I obligingly reversed the car and restored to Mr Mark-Brown his belongings.

"A thousand thanks," I said. "There's more use in you than I thought. Now be off and find the police."

As I sat on the hillside, watching the tail light dwindle, I reflected on the various kinds of crime I had now sampled. Contrary to general belief, I was not a murderer, but I had become an unholy liar, a shameless impostor, and a highwayman with a marked taste for expensive motor-cars.

(*To be continued.*)

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE GERMANS IN CHINA, 1900.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR G. K. SCOTT MONCRIEFF, K.C.B., C.I.E.

No one can deny that the interest of Germany in the Boxer crisis was a very special one. Her Minister at the Chinese Court, Baron von Ketteler, had been murdered. His secretary, Mr Cordes, who accompanied him on that fatal morning of the 20th June 1900, and who had a most marvellous escape from sharing his fate (though he was severely wounded), affirmed that in his opinion the murder was deliberately planned, and carried out in obedience to the orders of the Imperial Government by a Manchu soldier. The German Minister was at the time proceeding to the Chinese Foreign Office, where he had sought for an interview with the princes and officials, who therefore knew he was expected, although on the previous day they had not replied to his request for an interview. The excuse made afterwards that two foreigners were proceeding in chairs, and that when surrounded by an angry crowd had fired the first shot, was utterly untrue. The broad fact was that the person of the ambassador of a Power supposed to be on friendly terms with the Chinese Government was murdered in broad daylight on the road between the German Legation and the Chinese Foreign Office. This of course constituted a national affront of the gravest character, and may to some extent account for the provocative language used by the Kaiser when addressing the troops before embarkation on their campaign of vengeance, to "behave in such a manner that in future no Chinese should look askance at a German." The exhortation then given by the highest authority was only too faithfully and ruthlessly carried into effect.

It must, however, in justice to China, be admitted that brutal as the murder of the German Minister was, and gross the outrage on the sanctity of an ambassador's person, yet the European nations had struck the first blow in the campaign. Three days before the fatal 20th June, the Taku Forts, at the mouth of the Peiho river, were bombarded and captured. In this daring operation Russia, France, England, and Germany were all involved, but the success of the operations mainly turned on the audacious attack made by H.M.S. *Algerine*, Captain Johnstone Stewart, accompanied by the German cruiser *Iltis*. These two vessels left their moorings in company, and in the darkness of the night slipped quietly down the tortuous reaches of the Peiho to the close proximity of the forts. There before dawn landing-parties of Brit-

ish and German bluejackets and marines, under cover of fire from the ships, at very close range, assaulted with success the largest of the forts, and after its capture turned its guns on the others. A brilliant feat this, and of great political significance, for it prevented the Chinese from, as it were, locking the door of Tientsin to foreign entrance or exit.

Now the *Iltis* lies at the bottom of Tsingtao harbour, sunk there by the Germans to prevent her falling into the hands of the Allies in the present war.

A few days before the capture of the Taku Forts a small guard of marines of various nations, only 340 all told, arrived at Peking for the protection of the Legations. They had barely reached their destination when the railway which conveyed them from Taku was destroyed between Tientsin and Peking by the Boxers, thus making reinforcement of the garrison doubly hazardous.

Tientsin, it may here be mentioned, is about thirty miles from the mouth of the Peiho, although about twice that distance if the windings of the river are taken into account. The city of Tientsin, at the time of which we are considering, had a population of about a million. It is a prosperous commercial centre, owing to its position on the Grand Canal and at the junction of two navigable rivers. It had a series of foreign concessions lying outside the native city, and it had, besides the ancient walled ramparts, certain fortifications of more modern design, armed with heavy guns. The country all round is a flat alluvial plain. The railway goes on from thence eighty miles to Peking, where the terminus at that time was about a mile south of the city walls.

After the siege of the Legations had begun on the 20th June, a gallant attempt was made by Admiral Sir E. Seymour with a force of about 1500 men to force their way from Tientsin to Peking and relieve the little force there. But overwhelmed by numbers, and attacked by the best of the Chinese troops, they barely got half-way. With the utmost difficulty and with heavy loss they retreated to Tientsin, finding their way to an outlying fort, which they took by assault, whence they were rescued by a Russian force, part of reinforcements which had hurried to the scene from various adjacent countries.

With Sir E. Seymour there were many Germans, who fought right well, and suffered heavy losses. But, with the exception of Count von Soden and his small band of 30 marines at Peking, this retreat to Tientsin ended the part which Germany played in the actual suppression of the Boxers. There were a few individual Germans in Tientsin during the days of fierce fighting which ensued, notably one officer of considerable notoriety. He had formerly been in the German artillery, but had left that service to advise the

Chinese Government in armaments and fortifications, and also, it was said, to do a little business as an agent for the sale of weapons. He, however, was a free lance, not a recognised representative of the Fatherland. The troops who accomplished the capture of Tientsin, and who fairly turned the tide of Chinese success after a fortnight of furious fighting, were Japanese under General Fukushima, Russians under General Vogak, and British troops under Sir Arthur Dorward. These allied forces had been hastily gathered together from the nearest available place, and gallantly fought shoulder to shoulder with bluejackets and marines landed from the allied fleets lying off Taku Roads. The fact that the Boer War was then going on has doubtless tended to obscure the brilliancy of these operations in this country, but many a fight that is commemorated on regimental colours has been far less severe and infinitely less important than Tientsin in July 1900.

However, for our present purpose all that need be said is that the Germans were not in this affair at all. Nor, later on, early in August, were they represented in the advance on Peking and its memorable relief on the 14th August. In the triumphal march through the hitherto inviolate precincts of the Forbidden City, which took place a few days after the relief, the only representatives of the Power who, more than any other, had reason to be avenged, were von Soden and his little handful of marines.

Meantime in Germany great preparations were being made. The troops there were specially selected and enlisted for oversea service. The staff was carefully chosen. The command was given to Field-Marshal Count von Waldersee, who, by consent of the various Powers concerned, was to take command in any field operations where other allied troops were concerned, and in other respects was to have under his command the English and Japanese, as well as the German contingents. The other nations did not accept him as their leader except actually on the field of battle.

The German troops arrived in China in October. By that time the fighting in and around Peking was over, and Tientsin had resumed a good deal of its normal peace conditions. A treaty port in the far East has, in addition to its native town, a series of foreign concessions, where each nationality concerned tends to reproduce, more or less unconsciously, the characteristics of the parent country. At Tientsin the British Concession, with its villas, its public gardens, club, hotels, &c., is very like a town in the south of England. In the absence, however, of a German Concession, there was then a considerable German community resident in the British Concession, and it was, naturally, there that the Field-Marshal and his Staff took up their abode on arrival.

One of his first anxieties was

about the restoration of the railway to Peking. This line, built a few years previously, was the property of the Chinese Imperial Government, but it was mortgaged to British bondholders, and it had been built by British engineers. The portion, 30 miles, from Taku to Tientsin was, thanks to the capture of the Taku Forts and the grim hold on Tientsin by the Allies, quite intact, and it had been worked by Russian engineers continuously from the outbreak of the war. The portion between Tientsin and Peking, however, some 80 miles, had been in the hands of the enemy after Sir E. Seymour's retreat, and they had destroyed it in a manner that was inconceivably thorough. After the relief of the Legations, one of the earliest steps towards restoring order to the country was the re-establishment of communication. The country was still swarming with bands of marauders, however, and so about the end of August a small mixed force of British troops was sent to occupy an important place on the line, to clear the surrounding country of enemies (which it did after a few "scraps"), and begin the reconstruction of the railway. The Russians at first were rather inclined to resent this, as they regarded themselves as the paramount European Power in that part of the world, but their objections to the British activity did not assume a hostile attitude, and the British sappers went on working at the line with customary calmness, assisted by a Japanese battalion.

This went on for about six weeks, and then the Germans came to Tientsin.

A telegram to the British General from the Chief of the Field-Marshal's Staff, requested that the commanding officer of the British engineers should be sent to Tientsin to confer there with the Germans as to the future of the railway. I was accordingly ordered to proceed to Tientsin, about the middle of October, for this purpose.

With the German Headquarter Staff was Colonel "Jimmy" Grierson, who had been specially ordered from Lord Roberts' Staff in South Africa to Colombo, there to await the arrival of the German Field-Marshal. He had formerly been for some years Military Attaché at Berlin, and knew many of the Headquarter Staff intimately. It is perhaps unnecessary to say that his sudden death at the beginning of the present campaign was nothing short of a national misfortune, for no man in the whole army was so well acquainted with the ways and customs of our foes.

When I arrived at Tientsin there was an expedition just starting, under a French general, but with German and British troops forming part of it, for Paotingfu, a city where various European refugees were still in durance vile. There was naturally some stir and excitement among the Germans, taking the field for the first time since 1870. On the day of my ar-

rival there was an inspection by the Field-Marshal of the British contingent who were to form part of the force, and very special admiring criticism was passed on the gallop past of a battery of Horse Artillery, whose turn-out was as perfect as it would have been at Aldershot, though the critical eye of Grierson had noted some defects.

After this came lunch with the Headquarter Staff. I sat beside two very distinguished men, Colonel Count Yorck von Wartenberg, and Major-General von Schwarzhoff. The former was a great authority on the far East, having studied Chinese and Japanese politics with great discrimination and care. He was also a gifted writer on military history, and his study of Napoleon's campaigns and personality as a leader is a standard work on the subject. In appearance he was like a hale and robust English squire, with weather-beaten face and white hair.

General von Schwarzhoff, Chief of the Staff to Count von Waldersee, struck me as being a man of great ability. He seemed then to be in the prime of life, though, as he had the medal for the 1870 campaign, he must have been at least 50 years of age. He was said to be hostile to England, and to have shown this at the Hague Conference, where he was one of Germany's representatives. But his manner to me on this and subsequent occasions showed no trace of dislike to our country. He was not so genial perhaps as some others, but he was at least courteous, and gravely considerate of my opinion. This was all that one could reasonably expect, and it was certainly in contrast to the undisguised arrogance of some of the German officers.

Strange to say, both Count Yorck and von Schwarzhoff met their end before many months were over, by accident. The former was found suffocated by the fumes of a stove in his room, the latter was burnt to death under circumstances which are related below.

In discussing the railway question, the Chief of the Staff told me that a railway battalion had been sent out by the Emperor's express desire, and that he particularly hoped that it might be given the opportunity of practising in actual war conditions. He knew that the British had political claims to the railway, and that the Russians also had desires which could not be ignored; but these were matters for diplomatists, not for soldiers, and that meantime it was for us to try and mutually assist one another. I replied to this, that we should be only too willing to give the Germans a part in the reconstruction, on the understanding that it was in no way a political claim, and I suggested that they would probably find it would be most convenient for them to work from the end nearest to the sea, while we, with the assistance of the Japanese, would work from Peking in the opposite direction, and so ultimately we would meet, and that when the line was restored the working could

be arranged on terms to which all the allies could agree, and by means of some board on which all interests could be represented. This seemed quite satisfactory to the German general, and he agreed, asking me to settle details with the officer commanding the railway battalion, to whom he introduced me, and with whom I fixed an hour and place for further discussion.

I arrived punctually at the appointed time, but no German was there. Half an hour passed away, then three-quarters, and I thought possibly he or I might have made some mistake as to the hour, when he entered the room. He made no apology for keeping me waiting, merely remarking that he had had other things to do. I saw that the case was one for faithful dealing, so I told him that in the British army it was not customary for senior officers to dance attendance on their juniors, and that although I wished to co-operate with him in every way, mutual assistance must be based on mutual courtesy. He was very much astonished, evidently, that any one should object to make his personal arrangements subservient to the convenience of a Prussian officer, and he stared at me in blank amazement. However, though he did not express, even then, any regret, his manner was decidedly better. He told me the surroundings of his new life were so utterly different from anything he had ever been accustomed to, that he did not know what to do. He was evidently well instructed in ordinary technical details, but his theory and practice had worked in a comparatively restricted groove, and like the Berlin cabman with his 119 rules, he had no idea what to do when the 120th case occurred.

After settling with him how he was to work, I returned to Peking and placed our work on the railway there in the capable hands of Colonel (now Major-General Sir Ronald) Macdonald, who had recently arrived in China.

Soon one began to hear tales of German cruelty to the people of the country. No doubt these lost nothing in the telling, but there was no doubt that in undertaking various, and most unnecessary, punitive expeditions, the injunctions of the Kaiser were carried out to an extent which speedily gave the Germans an Asiatic reputation of an unenviable sort. My duty took me about the middle of November along the lines of communications, and at several of the posts where we had small garrisons, appeals were made to the British Commandants by respectable Chinese to protect them from German brutality. It was a difficult position for us; however, on one occasion I thought it was my duty to intervene. The headman of a walled town some six or seven miles from the line of railway, at this place under reconstruction by the Germans, made a petition to me to intercede with the Foreign Powers at Peking against a threat which the Germans had made, to

bombard his town with artillery unless by a certain date a quantity of railway material was produced. The headman said they had assisted to unearth all railway rails, sleepers, &c., that had been concealed in the villages near the line, and that there was none in the walled town. He had offered to allow the town to be searched, and if I came he would let me or any one deputed by me search the whole place, but he protested against the ruin and destruction that was threatened. I thought likewise, and so telegraphed to the British headquarters that I would be ready to have the place searched and any railway material handed over to the Germans, if only the orders for bombardment were withdrawn. I rode next day to the place, was met there by the municipal authorities, and was satisfied that the place was not a likely spot for hiding railway rails, &c. I am glad to say the infamous order was cancelled.

In Tientsin the situation was a very difficult one. The general commanding the German troops was a typical Prussian, overbearing and arrogant. Nothing that Germans did, or could do, was wrong, and nothing could be allowed in any way to interfere with their interests. Naturally, every one of his subordinates took their tone from him, and although we British officers were, I think, universally ready to be friendly with the Germans, we found it difficult. What surprised most of us was that the Germans were lacking in many professional matters which we have always been taught to regard as important. Their drill, of course, was excellent. But their care of their men, a matter of first importance, was very poor. That there was none of the hearty comradeship that exists between British officers and men, goes without saying. But as a matter of ordinary prudence one would imagine that the wellbeing of the private soldier was a subject of at least some interest to his officer. The German officer seemed to look upon the soldiers simply as machines, which could be replaced at short notice. They took no care of them in billets or barracks. Consequently the death-rate from sickness was some 10 *per cent* higher than in our army, though the majority of the British force were natives of India, who might have naturally suffered more than the Germans from the extreme cold of a Chinese winter.

So also with horses. Many of the German officers rode well, but they were very bad horse masters.

In matters of transport and equipment one could hardly expect them, in the first expedition of any importance that their army had ever undertaken overseas, to attain to anything like the degree of practical excellence that some other armies had reached. But in general military knowledge we found the standard of information much less than

we had expected—much to our surprise, for the education of the German officer was popularly supposed to be far ahead of our own. On the other hand, their troops were wonderfully drilled, very smart on parade, and very thoroughly instructed in any technical work which happened to belong to their distinctive branch.

There was much trouble between the men of the German army and our own in the daily life of the Tientsin Concessions. The British Concession lies between the French and the German Concessions, and on the principal road leading through from one to the other there was a large warehouse or factory where a battery of English horse artillery were billeted, together with a number of Austrians, with whom they lived in perfect harmony. Numbers of Germans used to pass, especially on Sundays, and generally they indulged in some language provocative of a breach of the peace. At first also there were brawls in some of the taverns which had sprung up in various places. The German soldiers had the advantage of our men too, in that they always wore sidearms (bayonets or swords), whereas the British soldier in "walking-out dress" carries no weapon but a cane. This, however, was soon rectified by the permission given to the men to carry a somewhat stouter staff than the "swagger" stick usually admitted, with the result that it was found to be rather a dangerous game for a German to tackle a British or Indian soldier. There were, however, numerous cases of quarrels, and these would undoubtedly have become very serious if the British General had not made an appeal, which was entirely successful, to the men to uphold the good name of their country for steady patience and dignity. Even the Indian soldiers realised this. On one occasion a drunken German knocked off the turban of a Pathan havildar (sergeant) of a well-known Punjab regiment. Such a gross insult would on the Indian Frontier have been wiped out with bloodshed. But the Pathan kept his temper. There were many such cases, but there were also some cases in which the Indians took the law into their own hands, and used their stout cudgels with powerful effect.

Police duty under such circumstances was no sinecure. We were fortunate in having a strong force of Australian bluejackets, who took on this duty with the cheerful alacrity of the British sailor, and with admirable justice and impartiality. There were, of course, some very amusing incidents. On one occasion the German General complained that one of the police had grossly insulted a German officer, and even gone so far as to deprive him of his sword, an unheard-of outrage. On investigation it appeared that the officer in question, very drunk, had tried to get into some building or place guarded by the police. On being prevented from doing so,

he had drawn his sword; but the bluejacket was too quick for him, and struck him sharply on the wrist with his baton, forcing him to drop the sword, which the sentry snatched up. Then he addressed him (so it transpired in the investigation) in the following language: "Now look here, young feller, my advice to you is, 'You go 'ome.' And as for this sword, you'll get it back to-morrow, if you come and ask for it proper." The officer in fact had been guilty of the very serious military offence of trying to force a sentry. This aspect of the case was, of course, represented to the German military authorities, but there was not the smallest acknowledgment that they would take any disciplinary action against the offender.

After the Australians had left the country, the police duty in question was taken over by the Welsh Fusiliers, who acquitted themselves with much credit. I had a quite unsolicited tribute to this effect from a German officer one day in course of conversation. He said they all admired the British soldiers, in this and other duty, for their calmness. But there were many occasions when this steady behaviour of the men on police duty was tried to the uttermost. One of the most notable of these occurred one day when a small police patrol was going round a part of the Concessions which was particularly objectionable, a road where vile shops of all sorts abounded, some of which had been placed "out of bounds" by order of the combined military authorities. Finding some men trying to get into one of these, the police interfered (without undue violence, as it subsequently transpired), and the delinquents not only resisted but managed to raise a tumult which brought from neighbouring shops and taverns a crowd of others of various nationalities, like a swarm of angry wasps. (It must be remembered that in those days, before the Entente was thought of, the English were not popular with their present French and Russian allies, any more than they were with the Germans.) The mob attacked the little band of Britons with stones and bricks and other missiles, while bayonets were drawn, and the half-drunken crowd prepared to make a charge. The corporal in command of the patrol formed his men in a line across the road and coolly awaited the rush. One of his band, however, fell, knocked senseless from a stone on the head. The man who did it fell the next moment, shot by the corporal's order. Then followed a wild rush, but the Welshmen stood firm, and blood was shed on both sides. Presently some Japanese appeared on the scene, and, always being friendly to England, wanted to fix bayonets and charge. This, however, the Welsh corporal would not allow, and he kept his ground with his little handful of men till an officer's picket arrived on the scene and dispersed the mob.

Of course there was much

trouble with the German authorities about this. They wanted the corporal tried by court-martial for murder, while the British wanted the corporal promoted. I do not remember how it was settled.

That the kindly relations between English officers and their men had not escaped the approving attention of the German authorities was shown by the following rather ludicrous experience. One day some soldiers were playing football, with officers, as usual, on both sides. In the course of the game a detachment of German soldiers was marched down to the ground, where they halted and remained for some time as spectators. In an interval of the play, the officer in command approached one of the English officers who was playing, and said that he had been ordered to go there and observe how English officers and men played games together, with good results, and that, in order that the Germans might learn how to copy this, he thought it might be useful if a selected German soldier were allowed to form part of the team on each side. The Englishman, of course, was rather amused, but gladly gave permission. Accordingly a German private was detailed to play on each side. He divested himself of such articles of dress and equipment as interfered with his movements, and solemnly played football for the first time in his life, much to the delight of the British soldier. After a sufficient time had elapsed to enable the men to understand the game, the officer in command again saluted the English officer, withdrew his men, and marched off the ground. It is doubtful, however, whether the lesson was practised any further.

It is pleasant to record that in the dark days of January 1901, when we heard the sad news of the illness and death of our beloved Queen, there was much kindly sympathy expressed by the Germans. At the funeral service at Tientsin the majority of the German officers were present, and they were most anxious that their troops should form part of the pageant under arms on that occasion. This, however, was respectfully declined, on the ground that only subjects of her late Majesty could be permitted to take part in the actual ceremony.

Not many days after this I had occasion to go to another garrison of allied troops at Shanhaikwan, distant about 180 miles to the north of Tientsin. It is a place of importance, because there the Great Wall of China comes down to the sea. There the railway to Newchang and Manchuria pierces the Wall, and a considerable town has clustered round the spot. There are also some fortifications of much more modern date than the Great Wall, but infinitely less remarkable in respect of skill and ingenuity. There is something magnificent about the skill that devised and the energy that executed a mighty work stretching from

this eastern sea, over precipitous mountains and vast wastes for hundreds of miles along the whole northern frontier of the Chinese Empire.

Here in October 1900 the Chinese forts surrendered to the allied Powers, and detachments from seven foreign armies were dotted in forts and billets between the sea-coast and the city. A light railway which had been brought from Calcutta by the British force had been laid down connecting the piers, where goods and stores were landed, with the various forts and camps, and each of the Allies had the use of the line and the rolling stock one day in each week. The British, to whom the line belonged, asked for no payment or other acknowledgment, and took no greater share in the use of the line than was enjoyed by others. Great complaint, however, was made that whereas the other nations took particular care not to abuse this concession, the Germans took no pains whatever to leave the rolling stock and line in the condition in which they found it, assuming in this, as they did in all other matters, that if other people's interest suffered through their action it was not a matter which concerned them.

The British general, the late Sir Alexander Reid, who commanded all the allied forces at Shanhaikwan, was a Scot from Aberdeen, a man of massive frame and of resolute will. Between him and the colonel commanding the German troops there was no love lost. The latter was a wild, hard-drinking swashbuckler, who had recently come from one of the German colonies, which by all accounts he had painted very red. Shortly before I arrived at Shanhaikwan there had been some allied operations against hordes of Chinese banditti in the adjacent country. The German colonel and another had deliberately disregarded the orders of the British general in a most flagrant manner. Reid was not the man to be treated in this way, and sending for the delinquents, he (like Lewis Carrol's Hiawatha)

> "Stated in emphatic language
> What he'd be before he'd stand it,"

and finally wound up by saying, "I'll clap ye in my quarter-guard," words which may have been obscure in themselves, but absolutely clear in their intention.

When I was at Shanhaikwan, too, everybody was laughing over the mule episode. Some mules belonging to the British force had got loose, and had careered all over the place. One was discovered in the German lines. A letter was written asking that it should be returned. The answer came, "To-morrow at eight o'clock you will become a mule." No occult magic was intended, merely an imperfect translation of the verb *bekommen*.

Another mule came to a very tragic end. Rejoicing in an unwonted freedom, it had the audacity to pursue no less a personage than the German

colonel, who was quietly riding a pony on a public road. His version of the story is that the mule pursued him with open mouth and discordant voice, and that after vainly endeavouring to shake it off he was obliged in self-defence to draw his revolver and shoot it. The mule, anyhow, whether innocent or guilty of an unwarrantable attack and insult on the person of the representative of Germany, was dead, and it could not be shown on the casualty returns as "killed in action," nor would any British officer certify that it died "through the result of an accident." The British general was very much annoyed with the German colonel, and the latter was equally indignant with the British. Every one else was hugely amused. *Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ!*

Whether it was with a view to pouring oil on the troubled waters or not is not evident, but about this time the Field-Marshal, Count von Waldersee, came to Shanhaikwan for the purpose of reviewing all the allied troops. A very notable review it was, quite unique in history. About 8000 troops of seven different nations, commanded by a British general, and saluting a German field-marshal, under the very shadow of the Great Wall of China. It was a remarkable sight, though the fact that it took place on a bitterly cold day, with a threatening snowstorm and gusts of freezing wind, made it less of a picturesque spectacle than such reviews usually are. The only cavalry were some Siberian Cossacks on shaggy ponies, and the well-mounted Jodhpur Lancers, commanded by that splendid soldier, Sir Pertab Singh.

That evening the Field-Marshal dined with the British Headquarter Staff, and I had the pleasure of sitting near him. I had not met him before, and found him a most charming and courteous old gentleman. After dinner the first toast was, of course, to our own sovereign, "The King." It was the first time any of us had heard this toast in these words, and it brought home to us our great national loss. The next toast was "The German Emperor." The courteous Field-Marshal said, "I raise my glass to the health of the youngest British field-marshal," alluding to the fact that King Edward had recently conferred that rank on the Kaiser. The conversation turned on the subject of British field-marshals, and I found to my surprise that the German officers sitting near me knew the names of all our field-marshals. Whether they knew their characters and histories as well, or what use they made of this knowledge, I cannot say, but it was somewhat characteristic of their methodic study of military matters.

A remark that I had visited some of the battlefields of 1870 — as many English officers have done — elicited an enthusiastic response from one of those sitting beside me, who had been a subaltern in

a fusilier regiment at Weissenberg and Worth. With a little persuasion the old Field-Marshal began to relate *his* experiences of the campaign, in which he served as a major. He spoke specially of the tremendous ring of artillery fire at Sedan, and the brave but ineffectual attempts of the French to break through the German circle. It was all very interesting, the more so because few were even then left in the German army who took part in that memorable war.

Not long after this I was back again at Peking, and the day after my return went to pay my official call at the Field-Marshal's Headquarters. He was living in a beautiful Chinese house on the borders of a large lake in the Imperial City. This house, like all other Chinese houses that I have seen, comprised three blocks facing inwards to a courtyard, each block containing three rooms. In the centre of the courtyard had been erected a little asbestos house which had been brought from Germany for the Field-Marshal's personal use. Over the court was a framework of poles to be used in summer for carrying an awning. In one of the blocks at the side of the court the Chief of the Staff, and in another the principal military secretary, resided, but the third and largest block contained the reception and dining rooms. I mention these details as they all affect the disaster which followed not many weeks later.

When I was writing my name in the Field-Marshal's book, the old man chanced to come out accompanied by his personal Staff, and greeted me very pleasantly. He invited me to accompany him to an inspection of the First Battalion of the East Asiatic Regiment, which had been specially raised from the Guards in Berlin. I very gladly accepted His Excellency's invitation, and accompanied him round the ranks. That they were extraordinarily smart goes without saying. The drill was perfect. Then followed an attack practice (with ball cartridge) across the frozen surface of the lake against targets on the other side. Incidentally this may give some idea of the size of Peking, for these operations took place, with perfect safety, inside the limits of a park in the Imperial City. The German tactics on this occasion were the close formation of which we have heard so much recently. After the inspection was over, I was invited by the Field-Marshal to dine with him that evening and meet the officer commanding the inspected battalion.

In the evening we assembled in one of the beautiful reception rooms, to which allusion has been made. The walls and ceiling were covered with beautiful carving, there were very handsome porcelain vases, and pieces of red lacquer of great value. General von Schwarzhoff, near whom I found myself standing, was apparently a connoisseur, and spoke pleas-

antly and learnedly about them. Our conversation was, however, interrupted by the Field-Marshal bringing to me, for introduction, the major commanding the battalion, a smart Prussian guardsman. "He is a countryman of yours," said the Count von Waldersee; "his name is Graham." I sat next Major Graham at dinner. He told me his father was a Scotch Presbyterian minister who had settled many years before in Berlin, and had married a German wife. He, their eldest son, was in the army, but a younger brother was an English clergyman.

Curiously enough, I had met, many years before, at the autumn manœuvres at Coblentz, a somewhat similar case of a Scotsman in the German Guards. I was at that time a subaltern, and, visiting the manœuvres, was placed under the care of a subaltern on the staff of the German army, who now I think is commanding an army corps. One evening as we were crossing the manœuvre ground, a Guards officer passed us, and we exchanged salutes. "That," said my mentor, "is a countryman of yours. He comes from a place called Kinross." As I happen to hail from the same part of the country I asked his name, and was told "Von Stedman." The name was not unfamiliar to me as that of a respectable, but by no means aristocratic, burgess of the little county town, and hardly a man to have relatives officers in the Guards of his own or any other country. However, when shortly afterwards I went home and made inquiries, I learned that one of the family of that name had, after taking a medical degree in Edinburgh, settled in Berlin, where he had risen to great eminence, had become Court physician, and his three sons were all officers in the Guards Corps, one of whom, in the Empress Augusta's regiment, was the one I had met at Coblentz. One cannot help wondering how many Scotsmen there now are in the ranks, or as officers, in the armies of our enemies. In the eighteenth century, as Count von Waldersee reminded me that evening, there was no name more famous among Frederick's lieutenants than Marshal Keith. And I am told that another Keith, fighting against the Turks on the Austrian frontier, found that the Turkish general was, or had originally been, a Scotch sailor from Kirkcaldy.

Some two months or so after this little dinner party a very sad affair occurred in the place where we had been so hospitably entertained. I had been dining with two very pleasant brothers in a Saxon battalion, and was riding home with an officer on the Headquarter Staff, named von Lettow, with whom I had formed acquaintance—a well-mannered, well-educated man. It was a lovely time of year, and we often took walks in the morning together before our day's work began, with a view to improving our knowledge of languages. Next morning von Lettow met me with the news that after we

had parted the previous evening about eleven o'clock, he had seen a bright light in the direction of the Field-Marshal's headquarters, and coming round a corner he saw to his horror that the whole place was ablaze. Galloping on, he turned out every guard that he could find, but by that time the fire had spread rapidly. The Field-Marshal had just gone to bed in his little asbestos house, and he was rescued just in time before the blazing poles above fell in on the top of it. Von Schwarzhoff had got out all right, but rushed in again to get some papers of value, and just then the roof of the house he occupied fell in with a crash, burying him in its ruins. His charred remains were afterwards found in the *débris*.

A day or two afterwards the funeral took place. Troops of all nations lined the road from the Headquarters round the lake where I had seen the Guards' battalion manœuvring, to a temple on a peninsula where it was intended to form a temporary mausoleum. The principal officers of the Allied armies gathered to pay a last tribute of respect to one who, it was universally recognised, was a most brilliant soldier, and whose death was a great loss to his country. The old Field-Marshal, in the uniform of a Uhlan regiment, received his guests with his usual dignity. He told me with much evident pleasure that among the telegrams of condolence which he had received was one from Lord Roberts.

The service was a very simple one. A hymn, a prayer, and then an address by the Field chaplain, in which sympathy for the widowed mother of the deceased General, in far-off Wurtemberg, was the dominant tone. Then the solemn procession wound slowly along a shady avenue round the shores of the lake, between rows of soldiers of all the allied nations, with arms presented and stately music. After the gun-carriage walked in slow time officers in varied and brilliant uniforms. On the surface of the lake the lotus plants were putting forth shoots of vivid green, and swallows skimmed over the surface. Nature was in a most attractive mood of returning spring, and against the clear blue sky the brilliant yellow roofs of the Chinese imperial city stood out with vivid effect. At one of the yellow-roofed buildings, erected on a little peninsula jutting into the lake, the cortége stopped, the mortal remains of Julius von Schwarzhoff were reverently carried into this temporary resting-place, and after a brief blessing, the last honours were paid.

Whether it was from the personal character of Count von Waldersee, or from the fact that the allied armies in Peking had each a definite quarter allotted to it, where it could be entirely apart from any of the others, I cannot say, but there was certainly less quarrelling in Peking among the allied troops than there was in Tientsin. In the ad-

jacent country, however, the Germans appear to have behaved with that "frightfulness" which was part of their monarch's parting injunction to them. They seem, however, to have exceeded even his instructions. For, after some particularly flagrant case of cruelty, Dr Morrison, the well-known 'Times' correspondent, telegraphed home an indignant account of it, with the result that almost at once orders came from Berlin to mitigate the barbarous procedure.

I did not personally see any of this. My duty at that time was the construction of the British portion of the permanent defences of the Legation area in Peking. These defences had been settled by a committee of officers of all the allied nations, and accepted by the Diplomatic Corps. The proposals, thus sanctioned, had to be carried into effect by the engineer officers in each case for the particular part which lay adjacent to the Legation of their own nation, and in co-ordination with those of the Allies on either flank. My colleagues were Russian, Italian, and Japanese. The Russian chief engineer was a gallant officer named Tretiakoff, who afterwards fell, after doing splendid service, at Port Arthur. Unfortunately he knew neither French, German, nor English, and I knew no Russian, so our intercourse was limited to what was possible by interpretation through his adjutant, who could talk a little German. With my Italian and Japanese colleagues I had no difficulty, as they both spoke French admirably.

During this period, therefore, I saw little of the German troops. What did, however, come under my notice more directly than field operations was their behaviour on the railway.

This had now been completed for some months, and was once more under British management. Engineer officers of railway experience had been brought from India, and the tangled business of maintenance and management was being steadily unravelled. At each station there was a railway staff officer, whose business it was to administer the military requirements, and there was a guard, sometimes more than one, to enforce law and order. A Railway Executive Committee, under the able presidency of Colonel Macdonald, and composed of members of various nationalities, had drawn up a code of rules, which was accepted by all the Allies, giving definite instructions as to how the troops were to use the line, and providing for the interests of all the nationalities concerned without partiality, favour, or affection. One of the duties of this Executive Committee was to report to Headquarters the number of breaches of this code committed by the troops of each nationality. Those committed by the Germans were far in excess of any other,—indeed it was said that they were more than all the others put together.

The following incident may

illustrate the spirit in which they acted. I was leaving Tientsin one day, by the morning train for Peking, with Colonel Macdonald. He had some trouble with a young German officer who wanted to put a drunk man of his detachment, proceeding to Peking, into the train. Now one of the regulations in the Code of Rules was that if a soldier came drunk on to a platform he was not to be allowed into a train, but was to be handed over to a guard, if possible of his own nation, until he was disposed of. Colonel Macdonald pointed out to the young officer that he must obey the rule in question. The officer indignantly inquired whether his word was doubted that the man would be punished at the end of the journey. To this, of course, the only reply was that orders must be obeyed, and very sulkily the young officer handed over the culprit to a N.C. officer of the German guard at the station. As the train was moving off Colonel Macdonald saw the stationmaster waving his arms excitedly, so he stopped the train and inquired what the matter was. It appears that the young officer, as soon as he saw that the British Colonel's back was turned, ordered the N.C. officer of the guard to put the drunk soldier, at the last minute, into the train. The result was that the young officer had some very plain truths impressed upon him, and he was reported to his own headquarters for his disobedience of orders, though whether any disciplinary action was taken in consequence we never heard.

Such breaches of discipline were always attended with risk of some international dispute, but the conduct of the German troops themselves made the risk even greater. On one occasion, for example, a train with German troops came into a station where the platform guard was composed of Gurkhas under a British officer. One of the German soldiers leaning out of a window behaved with gross brutality to an inoffensive Chinese vendor of fruit and cakes on the platform. This so raised the wrath of the Gurkha sentry that he rushed up to his officer, saying with much excitement in Hindustani, "By your honour's permission, I will now begin magazine fire" (into the brown of the Germans!)

So matters went on: there was an honest attempt on the part of the few, and those mostly of high rank, to meet the British and other foreign officers on the common platform of chivalry and honour; but on the other hand, the conduct of the majority of the German army was characterised by intense arrogance and absolute disregard for the common welfare, except in so far as it coincided with their own interests.

The Field-Marshal and his staff left Peking early in June 1901. On this occasion there was, of course, a considerable amount of military display. The whole road, from the Winter Palace to the railway station at the Temple

of Heaven, was lined with German troops. Here and there portions of the route were guarded by Chinese police in their quaint uniforms. An escort of the 16th Lancers (Indian army) accompanied His Excellency's carriage. At the railway station guards from the three nations who had accepted his orders—Germans, Japanese, and British—were drawn up in the order named. There was, of course, a large number of officers, chiefly German and English, to bid him and his staff good-bye. Many cordial expressions of goodwill were exchanged.

As the special train moved slowly out of the station, the German officers formed up at one end of the platform and the British at the other end. The former bade farewell to their chief with three "Hochs" after their Teutonic fashion, and as the train passed us we gave three lusty cheers after the manner of Britons. My last recollection of the kindly old Field-Marshal was his dignified figure on the little platform outside his railway carriage, with a very gratified expression at the kindly farewell given him by us. He had published an Army Order, thanking Sir A. Gaselee in particular, and the British officers in general, for their co-operation, and expressing in high terms his appreciation of the Indian forces.

Our impression of him, and of a few of those who were on his staff, and also some of the regimental officers, was that they were chivalrous and honourable gentlemen. Unfortunately this could not be said of the majority of the German officers, whose arrogance and truculence was combined with frequent underhand trickery. Rightly or wrongly, we regarded this as a sign of national decadence, believing as we did that a nation whose ruling caste displayed such moral qualities must be on the down grade.

Had men of Count von Waldersee's stamp been in the ascendant to-day, the ignominious history of German degradation might never have been written.

CHUMMY-SHIPS.

BY "BARTIMEUS," AUTHOR OF 'NAVAL OCCASIONS.'

THE Lieutenant for Physical Training Duties came down into the Wardroom and sank into the one remaining arm-chair.

"I must say," he ejaculated, "the sailor is a cheerful animal. Sixteen days steaming on end without seeing any enemy—just trailing the tail of our coat about the North Sea—we come into harbour and we invite the matelots to lie on their backs on the upper-deck (minus cap and jumper) and wave their legs in the air by way of recreation. They comply with the utmost good humour. They don't believe that it does them the smallest good, but they know I get half-a-crown a day for watching them do it, and they go through with it like a lot of portly gentlemen playing 'Bears' to amuse their nephews——" The India-rubber Man broke off, and surveyed his messmates with a whimsical grey eye. The majority were assimilating the contents of illustrated weeklies over a fortnight old; two in opposite corners of the settee were asleep, with their caps tilted over their noses, sleeping the sleep of profound exhaustion. One member of the Mess was amusing himself with a dice-box at the table, murmuring to himself as he rattled and threw.

The India-rubber Man, in no wise irritated at the general lack of interest in his conversation, wriggled lower in his arm-chair till he appeared to be resting on the flat of his shoulder-blades, with his chin buried in the lapels of his monkey-jacket. "I maintain," his amiable monologue continued, "that there's something rather touching about the way they flap their arms about and hop backwards and forwards, and 'Span-bend' and agonise themselves with such unfailing good-humour—don't you think so, Pills?"

The Young Doctor gathered the dice again, knitting his brows. ". . . Seventy-seven . . . seventy-eight — that's seventy-eight times I've thrown these infernal dice without five aces turning up. And twenty-three times before breakfast. How much is seventy-eight and twenty-three? Three and eight's eleven—put down one and carry one—I beg pardon, I wasn't listening to you. Did you ask me a question?"

"I was telling you about the sailors chucking stunts on the quarter-deck."

"I don't want to hear about the sailors: they make me tired. There isn't a sick man on board except one I've persuaded to malinger to keep me out of mischief. They're the healthiest collection of human beings I've ever met in my life.

"That's me," retorted the India-rubber Man modestly.

"I am responsible for their glowing health. They haven't been ashore for—how long is it?"

"Ten years, it feels like," said some one who was examining the pictorial advertisements of an illustrated paper with absorbed interest.

"Quite. They haven't had a run ashore for ten years—ever since the war started, in fact: and yet, thanks to the beneficial effects of Physical Training, as laid down in the book of the words and administered by the underpaid Lieutenant for Physical Training Duties, the Young Doctor is enabled to sit in the Mess all day and see how often he can throw five aces. In short, he becomes a World's Worker."

"It's just *because* they haven't been ashore for weeks and months, and in spite of the Lieutenant for Physical Training—Och! No, Bunje, don't start scrapping—it's too early in the morning, and we'll wake . . . those . . . poor devils—Eugh!—Poof!—There! What did I tell you!"

The two swaying figures, after a few preliminary cannons off sideboard, armchair, and deck stanchion, finally collapsed on to the settee. The sleepers awakened with disgust.

"Confound you, Bunje, you clumsy clown!" roared one. Between them they seized the Young Doctor, who was a small man, and deposited him on the deck. "Couldn't you see I was asleep, Pills?" demanded the other hotly. "You've woken Peter, too. He's had—how many is it, Peter?—eight morning watches running. I've brooded over him like a Providence from the fore-top through each weary dawning, so I ought to know." He yawned drowsily. "Peter saw a horn of the crescent moon sticking out of a cloud this morning, and turned out the anti-aircraft guns' crews. Thought it was the bows of a Zeppelin. Skipper was rather peevish, wasn't he, Peter?"

The Junior Watchkeeper grunted and turned over on to his other side. "Well, you nearly opened fire on a Northern Diver in that flat calm at dawn the other morning." The speaker cocked a drowsy eye on the Mess from under his cap-peak. "Silly ass vowed it was the periscope of an enemy's submarine coming to the surface."

"Truth is," said the Indiarubber Man, "your nerves are shattered. Pills, here's a job for you. Give the lads twopenn'orth of bromide and stop their wine and extras. In the meanwhile," he pulled a small book out of his pocket, "I have here a dainty *brochure*, entitled 'Vox Humana—Its Ascendancy over Mere Noise'—otherwise, 'Handbook for Physical Training.' I may say I was partly responsible for its production."

"I believe you, faith!" said the Fleet Surgeon bitterly, over the top of the B.M.J.

The Indiarubber Man wheeled round. "P.M.O.! That's not the tone in which to speak to your Little Ray of Sunshine.

It lacked *joie de vivre.*" The speaker beamed on the Mess. "I think we are all getting a little mouldy, if you ask me. In short, we are not the bright boys we were when war broke out. Supposing now—I say supposing we celebrated our return to harbour, and the fact that we haven't bumped a mine-field, by asking our chummy-ship to dinner to-night, and giving them a bit of a chuck-up! Which *is* our chummy-ship, by the way? Where's the WHAT HO! lying?" He walked to the scuttle and stuck his head out. "Blessed if I can tell t'other from which now we're all so beautifully disguised."

"We haven't got a chummy-ship," replied the A.P. "We don't want a chummy-ship. Nobody loves us. We hate each other with malignant hatred by reason of hobnailed livers."

"And if we had," interposed another lieutenant gloomily, "they'd far rather stay on board their own rotten ship. They're probably getting used to their Messman by now. The sudden change of diet might be fatal." The speaker turned to the Young Doctor. "Pills, what d'you get when you change your diet sudden-like—scurvy, or something awful, don't you?"

"Hiccoughs." The Surgeon dragged his soul from the depths of a frayed 'Winning Post' and looked up. His face brightened. "Why? Any one here——?"

"No, no, that's all right, my merry leech. Only Bunje wants to ask the WHAT HO'S! to dinner."

"Yes," interposed the Gunnery Lieutenant, with a sudden access of enthusiasm. "Let's ask 'em. Where's the Navy List?" He flung a tattered Navy List on the table and pored over it.

"Hear! Hear!" chimed in the Engineer Lieutenant-Commander. "Let's be a Band of Brothers, an' all drinks down to the Mess the whole evening. . ."

The Mess generally began to consider the project. "Here's the Commander," said some one. "Casting vote from him! D'you mind if we ask the WHAT HO'S! to dinner, sir? We all feel we should be better, nobler men after a heart-to-heart talk with our chummy-ships."

"Ask any one you like," replied the Commander, "as long as they don't ask me to dine with them in their ship by way of revenge."

"Carried," exclaimed the India-rubber Man. "'Commander, 'e sez, spoke very 'andsome!' I will now indite a brief note of invitation. Bring me pens, ink, and paper. *Apportez-moi l'encre de mon cousin, aussi du poivre, du moutard et des legumes—point a la ligne!* I got a prize for French in the BRITANNIA."

Here the Fleet Surgeon said something in an undertone about a Village Idiot, and left the Mess. As he went out the First Lieutenant entered with an apologetic mien which every one appeared to recognise instinctively. The Torpedo

Lieutenant looked up from his book. "Oh, no, Number One, spare us for just one morning. I've got a headache already from listening to Bunje."

The A.P. threw himself into an attitude of supplication. "Number One, consider the awful consequences of your act before it's too late. Consider what it means. If you make the Wardroom untenable I shall have to sit in the Office all the morning. I might even have to do some work!"

The First Lieutenant shook his head dourly. "The Chipping Party is going to start in the Wardroom this morning. Paint's inches thick on the bulkheads, and a shell in here would start fires all over the place. Bunje, if you want to write letters you'd better go somewhere else and do it."

The India-rubber Man thumped the blotting paper on his freshly written sheets, and looked up with his penholder between his teeth. "I've finished, Number One. Admit your hired bravoes."

As he spoke an ear-splitting fusilade of hammering commenced outside. The steel bulkheads reverberated with blows that settled down to a persistent rain of sound, deafening, nerve-shattering.

"They've started outside," shouted the First Lieutenant. A general exodus ensued, and the India-rubber Man gathered his writing materials preparatory to departure. "I guessed they had," he was heard to say. "I thought I heard a sound as it might have been some one tapping on the bulkhead."

The Watchkeepers asleep on the settee stirred in their sleep, frowned, and sank again into fathomless oblivion.

. . . . . .

The India-rubber Man entered the Wardroom in company with the Paymaster as the Corporal of the Wardroom Servants was putting the finishing touches to the dinner-table. They surveyed the apartment without enthusiasm.

"Considered as a banquet-hall I confess it does lack something," observed the former.

"There's a good deal of paint lacking from the bulkheads. Number One has had a field-day and a half."

The other nodded. "In the words of the song:

'There's no carpet on the floor,
And no knocker on the door,
Oh, ours is a happy little home. . . .'

Phillips, bring me the menu, and let's see if the Messman has succeeded in being funny without being vulgar."

Corporal Phillips brought the menu with the air of one who connives at a felony. "Messman says, sir, it ain't all 'e'd like it to be, what with guests comin' and that. But I says to 'm, 'War is war,' I says, 'an' we can't expect eggs-on-meat entrees, same 's if it was peace-time.'"

"To-day's beautiful thought!" remarked the India-rubber Man when the Corporal had withdrawn. "Really, Phillips has a knack of disclosing great truths as if they were the lightest gossip."

The Engineer Commander

came in, glancing at the clock. "Five minutes more and the WHAT HO'S! will be here. Bunje, my lad, you were responsible for this *entente*—have you any idea what we are going to do with them after dinner?"

"None," replied the India-rubber Man. "None whatever. It will come to me sudden-like. I might dress up as a bogey and frighten you all—or shall we try table-turning? Or we could dope their liquor and send them all back insensible. Wouldn't that be true Oriental hospitality? They 'd wake up to-morrow morning under the impression that they 'd had the night of their lives."

The members of the Mess began to collect round the fireplace with the funereal expressions customary whenever a mess-dinner is impending.

"Which of the WHAT HO'S! are coming?"

"Where 're they going to sit?"

"Who asked them?"

"Why?"

"Are drinks going down to the Mess——?" and then the door opened and the guests arrived, smiling, a little shy, as the naval officer is wont to be when he finds himself in a strange Mess. They were relieved of caps and cloaks, and under the mellowing influence of sherry and bitters began to settle down.

"Jolly good of you fellows to ask us to dinner," said the First Lieutenant, an officer with a smiling cherubic visage and a choleric blue eye. "We were getting a bit bored with our hooker. A fortnight of looking for 'Der Tag' gets a bit wearisome. D'you think the devils are ever coming out?"

"We didn't want to ask you a bit really," explained one of the hosts (the advantage of having a chummy-ship is that you can insult them in your own Mess). It's only a scheme of Bunje's for drinking intoxicating liquor to excess at the expense of his messmates."

The guests grinned sympathetically. As a matter of fact, few of the company drank little else than water during those days of strain and vigil. Frequent references to indulgence might therefore be regarded as comic, in a sense. "We thought of bringing our own chairs," added one, "in case you 'd landed all your spare ones."

"Yes," chimed in a third politely; "we didn't expect to find such a wealth of furniture—it 's like a model homes exhibition: you should see our Mess!"

The Gunnery Lieutenant made a gesture of deprecation. "The Watchkeepers insist on keeping the settee to caulk on in the intervals of hogging in their cabins. The piano was retained for the benefit of the Young Doctor. He can play *Die Wacht am Rhein* with one finger—can't you, Pills?"

The Young Doctor beamed with simple pride. "My sister's German governess taught me when I was a kid," he ex-

plained. "We have it every night — it's the only tune I know."

"The sideboard is to support the empty glasses of the bridge-players after the Padre has put down one of his celebrated 'No-trump' hands—we had to keep the sideboard. The arm-chair is for Number One to sit in and beat time while his funny-party chip paint off the bulkheads." The Gunnery Lieutenant looked round, "And so on, and so on —Oh, the gramophone? Bunje bust all the records except three, and we're getting to know those rather well. But as you're a guest, old thing, would you like 'Tipperary,' Tosti's 'Good-bye,' or 'A Little Grey Home in the West'?"

The Corporal of the Wardroom Servants interrupted these amenities with the announcement that dinner was ready, and a general move was made to the table.

Thereafter the conversation flowed evenly and generally. It was not confined to War. The men who make war either afloat or ashore do not talk about it over much. There are others—even in this England of ours — by tradition better qualified to do the talking, in that they see the most of the game. . . . On the whole, perhaps more "shop" was discussed than would have been the case in peace-time; but for the most part it eddied round much the same subjects as Wardroom conversation always does, with the India-rubber Man's Puck-like humour and gay mock-cynicism running through it like a whimsical pattern in an otherwise conventional design.

War had been their trade in theory from earliest youth. They were all on nodding terms with Death; indeed, most of the men round the long table had looked him between the eyes already, and the obituary page in the Navy List had been a reminder, month by month, of others who had looked there too—and blinked, and closed their eyes: shipmates and fleetmates and familiar friends.

War was the Real Thing, that was all. There was nothing about it to obsess men's minds. You might say it was the Manœuvres of 19— all over again, with the chance of "bumping a mine" thrown in, and also the glorious certainty of ultimately seeing a twelve-inch salvo pitch exactly where the long years of preparation ordained that it should.

A submarine specialist, whom the war caught doing exile in a "big ship," dominated the conversation for a while with lamentations that he was constrained to dwell in the tents of Kedar. Two minutes of his talk having nearly convinced every one that the sole *raison d'être* of the big ship was to be sunk by submarine attack, he and his theories passed into a conversational siding. The Watchkeepers exchanged mutual condolences on the exasperating tactics of drift-net trawlers, notes on atmospheric conditions prevalent in the North Sea, methods of removing nocturnal cocoa-stains

from the more vital portions of a chart, and other matters of interest to Watchkeepers. The Commander and the First Lieutenant of the "WHAT HO'S!" discussed the training of setters. The Young Doctor and his "opposite number," and those near them, found interest in morphia syringes, ventilation of distributing stations, and, a section of the talk whirling into a curious backwater, the smell of cooking prevalent in the entrance halls of Sheerness lodging-houses. . . .

The dinner went its course: they drank, sitting (as was their privilege and tradition), the King's health. Then the cigarettes went round, chairs turned a little sideways, the port circulated a second time. The conversation was no longer general; in pairs or by threes, according to taste, temperament, or individual calling, the members of the Mess and their guests settled down to a complacent enjoyment of the most pleasant half-hour in a battleship's long day.

Presently, while the Bridge table was being set out, the India-rubber Man rose from the table, and crossing to the piano began to vamp lightly on the keys, humming under his breath. A chorus quickly gathered round: a battered Naval Song-Book was propped up on the music-rest—more from habit than necessity, since the India-rubber Man could not read a note of music, and everybody knew the words of the time-honoured chanties. The pianist's repertoire was limited: half a dozen ding-dong chords did duty as accompaniment to "Bantry Bay," "John Peel," and "The Chinese Bumboatman" alike. But a dozen lusty voices supplied melody enough, the singers packed like herrings round the piano, leaning over each other's shoulders, and singing with all the strength of their lungs.

They exhausted the favourites at length, and the player wheeled round on his stool.

"What about one of the Guests for a song?"

"Yes, yes!" cried several voices. "Where's Number One? He's our Madame Patti. You ought to hear him sing—

'We don't serve bread with one fish-ball! . . .'

But it takes a lot of port to get him started—how d'you feel about it, Number One?" They spoke with indulgent affection, as a nurse might persuade a bashful child to show off before company.

He of the choleric blue eye was still sitting at the table with one of his hosts. He turned in his chair, smiling grimly.

"What's that about me? I don't want to start scrapping in a strange Mess, Snatcher, but if you really *are* looking for trouble——!"

"Don't mind us!" shouted the India-rubber Man delightedly. "We'll put up a scrap for you in half a jiffey if you feel like a crumpled shirt-front!" He looked round the Mess. "Wait till Flags and

the Secretary come in from dinner with the Old Man, and we'll out the gilded Staff. They're good 'uns to scrap."

As he spoke the door opened, and the Flag Lieutenant came in, to be met by a volley of greetings.

"We of the cuddy," he began in a tone of mincing severity, "are not pleased at the raucous uproar said to be coming from a Mess of Officers and Gentlemen. We are pained. We come to lend our presence to what might otherwise develop into an unseemly brawl——" He helped himself to a walnut out of a dish on the sideboard. "Here comes my colleague, the Secretary-bird. He, too, is more grieved than angry." The Secretary entered warily, and intending combatants girded their loins for battle.

"Pouf!" he exclaimed. "What a fug!" and elevated his nose with a sniff. The Fiery Cross was out.

"Out Staff!" said the India-rubber Man in a low voice. "Dogs of War! Out gilded popinjays!"

With a promptitude that hinted at long experience of internecine warfare, the newcomers embraced the first maxim of War: "If you must hit, hit first, hit hard, and keep on hitting." Like a flash the two members of the Personal Staff were on the India-rubber Man. A chair went crashing; a broken glass tinkled on to the deck, to the accompaniment of protests from the Paymaster, and before the Mess could join battle the India-rubber Man hurtled through the doorway on to the aft-deck, to pitch at the feet of a delighted marine sentry. By the rules of the game, once through the portals of the Mess there was no return until a truce was declared. The younger members of the Mess rose to a man; for a moment the guests hung back. It is not in the best of form to scrap in a strange Mess, except by express invitation.

"Come on!" shouted the Junior Watchkeeper. "Bite 'em in the stomach!" and flung himself upon the Secretary. The guests waited for no second invitation. It was a battle-royal, and the India-rubber Man, interned on the aft-deck, yelped encouragement to his erstwhile conquerors because they were fighting valiantly against hopeless odds.

A Rugby International, and a middle-weight boxer of some pretensions, although hampered by aiguilettes and out-numbered six to one, were not easily disposed of. But they were ultimately overpowered, and carried, puffing with exhaustion and helpless with laughter, over the scattered *débris* of the Bridge table, gramophone, and paper-rack, out through the doorway.

The Mess, breathing heavily, adjusted its ties and collars and smoothed its dishevelled hair. The Flag Lieutenant and Secretary retired to their cabins for more extensive repairs. The Bridge table was set upon its legs once more: the scattered cards collected.

"Polo!" said the India-

rubber Man. "Let's play polo!"

"How d'you do that?" asked one of the ecstatic guests. At the bottom of his heart he was also wondering why the greybeards of the Mess stood all this tomfoolery without protest. He had never been shipmates with the India-rubber Man.

The India-rubber Man took an orange off the sideboard, a desert-spoon out of a drawer, and straddled over the back of a chair. "Like this, d'you see? We generally play three a side, but as there are six of you, we'll play double sides." He tossed the orange on to the deck and hopped his chair in pursuit, brandishing the desert-spoon.

"That's a great game," said the First Lieutenant of the WHAT HO! and got him to horse. "Come on, our side, Boot and Saddle!"

As the game was about to start the door opened and the Flag Lieutenant entered hurriedly. He carried a signal pad in his hand, and there was that in his face that silenced the polo-players and caused the Bridge-players to lay down their hands.

"Signal," he said curtly. "Raise steam for full speed. Prepare for immediate action on leaving harbour." And was gone.

Those who had immediate duties elsewhere stampeded out of the Mess. Overhead there was a thud of feet and ropes-ends and the shrilling of pipes as the watch fell-in. A Midshipman thrust his head inside the door of the Wardroom. "Boat's alongside, sir!" he said, and vanished. The First Lieutenant of the visitors flung his boat-cloak over his shoulders.

"Well," he said, "we've had a topping evening. S'long, and thanks very much!"

Their hosts helped the departing ones into their great-coats. "Not 't all," they murmured politely in return. "Sorry to break up a cheery evening. Let's hope they've really come out this time!"

The India-rubber Man slid on to the music-stool again, put his foot on the soft pedal, lightly touched the familiar keys, and began humming under his breath:

"We don't want to lose you—
But we *think* you ought to go . . ."

There are many ways of saying "*Morituri te saluto.*"

FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

THE RAIDING WAZIR.

A MURDER had started his career, a deliberate murder with a deliberate purpose, carried out with cool calculation of risks and profits, and with such efficient cunning that it not only succeeded in its purpose, but also left him unsuspected.

Rahim Ullah, "the Kindness of Allah," was the name with which he had started life, and which none of his many bloodsheddings had caused him to change, in that land where the name of the Mohammedan's deity is so lightly taken on men's lips. For he was a Mahsud Waziri, an inhabitant of the country which produces the most turbulent of all the tribesmen of the Indian Frontier; where theft and murder, moving hand in hand through the land, go unnoticed if the very slightest excuse may be shown for their commission.

But the crime which he contemplated was one for which he had been able to find no excuse, however flimsy, of injury received or revenge due, and so it became necessary that he should commit it under some name other than his own; and on a certain day he proceeded down the main trade route of the Tochi Valley, which led from his home to British territory, giving it out that he was going for a spell of work, where wages were good, and where men were fools enough to make roads and bridges for other men to use.

When Rahim Ullah crossed the border, he struck out in a direction in which he was unlikely to meet any one who knew him, and, after a short period of waiting, he made for the other great route from British India to Waziristan, which lies along the Gumal river. Here he was a stranger, and so reached the heart of the country, known only by the assumed name of Chirag Din. He travelled with the excuse that he was making a pilgrimage from the British border, where he said he lived, to a shrine, consisting of the grave of a saint, decorated with a pile of wayside stones and scraps of dirty cloth, the inexpensive offerings of the many who had craved a blessing of the holy man in bygone days.

Thus it happened that to the anchorite who lived by the holy "ziarat," there appeared one day a short and scrubby little man with sharp eyes and a somewhat cringing manner, who announced his intention of worshipping there for some time. He had very little money, but made himself useful to the resident cleric with such good will that, when his funds ran out, he was invited to stay on and share, for the time being, the gifts which

pious charity placed at the priest's disposal.

One day, when Rahim Ullah was sitting by the shrine on the rough stone platform, in the shade of the thorny acacia-tree beneath which the holy man had sat for many a year, to extol the memory of the dead saint and to receive the doles made in his name, a huge fair Waziri from the highlands to the north strolled up and, having made his obeisance as he passed the shrine, seated himself on the edge of the shaded platform and opened a conversation. The man was obviously well-to-do. He carried a snider rifle, which in those early days, when the theft of weapons from India had not yet become as common as it has since, and when the smuggling of Continental rifles from the Persian Gulf was still in its infancy, was no small asset. Then, he was dressed in cotton clothes, which still retained some of their original claim to whiteness, and wore a scarlet waistcoat, made from the cloth of a discarded military tunic, while the conical cap, round which his puggri was wound, was heavily embroidered in gold.

"The Holy Man is away?" he inquired, as he seated himself.

"He is away attending a burying at Spin Obo, but he will be back at noon."

"Are you a new disciple?" continued the big man, looking at Rahim Ullah as he spoke. He sat with his rifle across his knees, leaning back at his ease, but with his mind alert and ready, as men in Waziristan must be if they desire to come to the honour of grey hairs. Rahim Ullah replied that he was there in that capacity, but only temporarily, and went on to explain how that he had come up the Gumal Valley from the border in search of a rifle at a certain price, and that if he did not hear of one soon he would return home again. The big stranger seemed interested, and spoke on the subject as on one which he understood, and, in course of the conversation, he managed to convey the impression that, although he was not at all eager to do so, he would be agreeable to sell his own snider, as he proposed buying a Government ·303, of which he had lately heard, but which he could not afford to buy until he had realised on his present weapon.

"My snider is a good gun and not expensive," he explained. "For all purposes of private revenge, of short range work in raids and ambushes, it is as efficient as a ·303. For me, I need a rifle that will kill afar, for I raid at times deep into the territory of the English, and I have known what it is to have the sepoys shooting at me at a thousand yards, when I could do nothing to defend myself except run like a mountain-goat from before their faces."

"The rifle indeed seems a good rifle, but what may the cheap price be of which you tell me?" asked the little man.

"The price is four hundred English rupees. I am no *bun-*

niah to charge more than a thing is worth, but less than that I cannot take."

"Now, by the Prophet's beard, I am sorry to hear you name such a sum. No doubt it is a just amount, but I have, alas! but half of it, and must look no longer at the rifle, though indeed I greatly desire to buy it."

"Well," said the big man, "if you cannot pay me the whole four hundred, I will, even at the risk of loss, allow you to buy it off me for no more than three hundred and eighty rupees, but to do more than that is impossible."

The usual haggle, such as may be heard, with variations only of speech and coinage, all the way from Constantinople to Yokohama, went through its inevitable course, until finally, after much protesting and many lamentations on both sides as to the financial loss which an honest and generous spirit must occasion its owner, the sum of three hundred rupees was fixed as the price of the snider and of twenty-three rounds of ammunition for it. The bargaining may have been rather less protracted than is usual in such a case, because Rahim Ullah, not having a rupee in the world, much less three hundred of them, had no intention of paying any sum whatever for the rifle, and therefore bargained merely because to have refrained from doing so would have been to proclaim the fraud in the plainest terms.

A place of meeting was appointed, a lonely spot on an open plain not many miles from where they sat. They were to meet there alone, without witnesses, and to make the exchange, a reversal of the usual custom in other countries, where witnesses are cited to ratify such transactions, but rendered necessary by the circumstances of the bargain. The men were utter strangers. Commercial probity can hardly be said to exist in the country, and any stratagem is fair in order to better an opponent in a deal. If, therefore, witnesses were called in, an uncontrollable factor would be admitted, and while it was equally true that the principals themselves were no more trustworthy than the rest, there was an esteemed and trusted method of controlling their vicious tendencies. This was nothing more or less than the breathing of an oath in the name of Mohammed, to deal fair and square with each other; and this they did, in full and proper form, there and then, at the shrine of the defunct saint, and parted to go their ways and meet again at the appointed time and place.

Rahim Ullah had of course no intention from the very first of being true to his oath; and, indeed, it is quite wonderful how very often the Mohammedan will take such an oath and promptly violate it, but far more wonderful, to the European mind, how successive generations of Mohammedans continue to place their property, and even their lives, at the mercy of this hoary fiction. So Rahim Ullah, instead of spending the time in

getting the money, as he had said he would, spent at least a part of it in selecting a great many small flat stones which, when tied up in a thick cloth, might pass for money until the cloth was opened, and hoped the while that he was, on this occasion, the only one of the pair who had invoked the Prophet with the deliberate intention of breaking the oath.

As he approached the appointed spot, he saw the big stranger sitting on a rock, awaiting him, with the coveted rifle in his hand. He went quickly forward and, as he reached him, he gave him the greeting of piety.

"Salam Alekum," he cried, "may you never be weary."

"Wah Alekum Salam," was the reply, and then after a pause, "Have you brought the money?"

"Without doubt. In this bag are the three hundred rupees, each one rung on a stone to test its genuineness. The bag I will place on this stone between us, until we have examined the rifle, when I will deliver the money piece by piece," and so saying, he took from his loose upper garment a large bag of rough cotton, filled with the flat stones he had so carefully selected for the purpose, and placed it on the rock at their side, and within reach of both of them. Then he continued, "And now show me the rifle and its working, for I have never used the snider, but only a muzzle-loader."

"The working is simple. Thus the breach opens, thus the cartridge is placed within it. A single motion closes it so, and it remains to draw back the hammer and pull the trigger."

"'Tis well," replied the purchaser. "If you will show me in my own hands but once, the lesson is learnt. Thus and thus I open the breach and insert the round, is it not so? And thus I close the breach, so that when I pull the hammer back the rifle is all ready, and it remains but to press the trigger," and as he spoke the word, he raised the muzzle, which had been pointing at the ground, until it covered the poor wretch who had trusted his oath, and without haste or hesitation, but with a set determination of many days, and with a treachery black as death itself, he pulled the trigger and shot the stranger dead.

At once he sprang into quick action. Standing over the dead man, he unbuckled from his waist, and clasped on to his own, the cartridge-belt with its load of ammunition. A long Afghan knife had hung at the victim's side, and this too he detached. A quick examination of the body made it sure that he carried nothing more of value, and, after a long and careful scrutiny of the surrounding country, the murderer dropped into the first nullah he came to, and made his way down it at top speed towards the border. He kept on the move until dark, and then hid for

the night in a patch of thick scrub, and having eaten such food as he had on him, he turned to examine his newly acquired possessions. On finishing, he muttered to himself,

"Yes, I have got to be content with having twenty-two cartridges instead of the full twenty-three, and I forgot to bring away the cloth I had tied the stones up in. Otherwise Allah has been with me to-day."

II. THE GREAT PRIZE.

It would be easy to follow the tale of achievements towards success, as it is understood across the border, of which this murder was the first. Starting with a petty descent on a string of donkeys, driven and guarded by their half-armed owners, the undertakings which followed the acquisition of the snider increased in magnitude until they reached the status of a first-class raid against a large village in British territory, with thousands of rupees and a few valuable ponies as the stake. With every advance there came an accession of wealth and influence, until Rahim Ullah found himself at the head of a band of twenty-four well-armed ruffians, all of whom he had rescued from destitution or danger, and all of whom he had himself armed, until their share of the depredations sufficed for the provision of weapons for themselves.

Most proverbs justify their definition as "wise sayings," and there is no doubt at least a modicum of truth in the one which speaks of there being honour among thieves, but it was certainly not invented in a Pathan country. Rahim Ullah's gang had no honour, although if thieving qualified them for its possession they should have had more than their fair share. Indeed the sole factor of their successful combination was that strongest of ties, a community of interest. They had a leader, cunning in stratagem and bold in execution, whose chiefest aim it was to keep his carefully-chosen and well-tried band intact. As for the rank and file, every carefully-planned raid produced perhaps the equivalent of a year's toil. Each man knew that no private enterprise could have been counted upon to bring in as much or to offer such immunity from danger; while all, both leader and led, knew well that in event of treachery the traitor would have twenty-four of the most desperate assassins in the country vowed, in local phrase, to drink his blood.

Their operations were not too frequent. They gave time for the increased watchfulness caused by their last success to die down before they appeared on the scene again. Rahim Ullah was now a rich man, and he had learnt that money laid out in spies brought in a heavy return in loot and security,

and, like the man-eating tiger, he never struck twice in succession in the same district. To these precautions and to his innate cunning, as well as to some vein of luck which persistently followed his movements, he owed it that he had been able for years to threaten a long line of border country, until the very sound of his very dreaded name made the village banker shudder for his money-bags and the mother instinctively to hold her child closer to her.

Now it happened at this time that for some months after the last raid no news of a prize of sufficient value and accessibility had come to Rahim Ullah's ears, and though his gang cost him nothing during periods of unemployment, he found himself growing impatient for a job, when one day news reached him which made him think very hard indeed.

The British have been in partial occupation of part of Waziristan for many years, though their hold has been restricted to merely a few scattered fortified posts, chiefly on the main roads, held by regulars or locally raised Militia, officered by men from the Indian Army. One of the largest of these posts, held at the time by half a battalion of an Indian regiment, is called Saranai, and, between this place and the shortest route to the Frontier, there existed then nothing more than a goat track, and rations and stores had in consequence to be sent round by the longer road, causing delay and extra work. The news that stirred Rahim Ullah so greatly was the intention of Government to survey and build a road between Saranai and the post of Killa, near the border.

"I myself saw the survey party and its escort march into Killa from Tank," said his informant. "The surveyors were a man in English clothes but not all white, a native babu and four coolies, one of them a Waziri. The escort was twenty-five rifles of the Indian regiment they call the 200th, under an Indian officer. There was no British sahib with them. They moved without care and did not even use their eyes. I think they may become an easy prey to your young men."

Rahim Ullah paid him well for his trouble, and the next day he himself walked across the hills and valleys to the nullah in which the road was to be made.

He arrived there late that evening and found shelter in the hut of one of his followers, who lived close by and under whose guidance he went at dawn the following morning to a point of vantage, from whence the length of the proposed route was visible. In the far distance the fort, Killa by name, where the side track parted from the main route, was plainly visible in the first rays of the sun. From there the path proceeded along the bed of a valley, at first open and pleasant, but gradually narrowing into a dark and ominous defile, overhung steeply at the side and intercepted by a

thousand smaller nullahs, which would serve to give access or means of escape to an enemy. On the left hand, as one looked down the valley, there towered a monstrous mass of rocky mountain, its crag a gigantic cube of rock with serried edges and fissured sides. Thence it descended five thousand feet to the valley beneath, a chaotic mass of overhanging cliff and boulder-strewn slope, diversified by pinnacle and abysmal depth, to show how dire had been the forces which had upreared this ill-omened mass, to mar the light of day with its dark shadow.

The hill which shut in the nullah on the opposite side was, in comparison, almost fair and pleasant seeming. It rose, indeed, steeply a thousand feet above the nullah-bed, but it was nothing worse than an ordinary rugged Frontier hill, and the road would follow doubtless where the present track ran, curving round the upper shoulder of this hill to gain the elevation of the plateau on which stood the post of Saranai. But though this hill was, in its main features, little to be remarked upon, its lowest slopes, where they run into the nullah, were formed of hard clay, coloured in wonderfully vivid shades of red and slate-blue and ochre, and wasted and fretted by ages of rain into innumerable little knife-edged ridges and pointed spikes, separated from each other by alley-ways, some of which were so narrow that a man could scarcely make his way along them.

No more difficult ground could have been devised in which to work and guard one's self against a guerilla enemy, to whom every cranny and fissure were known and available as lines of approach, while the great mountain, Takht-i-Yakub, offered a thousand safe refuges for slayers and thieves.

Rahim Ullah and his companion had not been long at their vantage-point before a stir was noticeable at the Fort, and presently a small compact group of men detached themselves and commenced moving up the path. The survey had now been in progress for three days, and more than half the road of twelve miles had been surveyed. They advanced towards the scene of the day's work, not indeed neglecting the stereotyped military precautions, but observing none of those which would have held them safe in such a situation. The regiment had never served on the Frontier, its officers and men knew none of its conditions, clung to none of its maxims, feared none of its inexorable stratagems. A hillside was nothing to them but a physical feature; it should have been the haunt of a thousand alarms. And so they marched placidly along, with never a man placed on the high ground to spy out the surrounding land, and with no alertness to keep their eyes ever scanning each possible shelter behind which an enemy might lurk.

Rahim Ullah watched them all that day. He saw them come, he saw them sit down

to drowse and eat while the surveyors carried out their task, he saw them wander home, straggling carelessly with no fear of consequences and no skill to avert them should they threaten, and he chuckled to himself as he arose from his seat behind a great boulder, to stretch himself and return home.

"Allah is great. Because his servant is humble in his sight, therefore has he given him this gift. Not only shall we have their rifles and their ammunition, but, because the men are Hindoo infidels, we shall gain a happier paradise by the holy deed of slaying them."

Word was sent round to collect the gang. They were to be at the hut, in which he had slept the previous evening, at one hour before sundown the next day, and their leader, seated on the flat roof of the little house, saw them assemble with pride and satisfaction, when he remembered the toils and dangers which their organisation had meant to him. They came one by one, dropping in quietly from various directions, each man rifle in hand and with either a sheepskin coat or a warm woollen blanket to serve as bedding if required. Each, too, had his thick flat cakes of Indian corn slung across his shoulders in a cotton cloth, and one in perhaps four carried a small leather water-skin, for the Frontier is a thirsty land. They walked in through the door of the courtyard in which the hut stood, and sat down with a word of greeting and squatted there, talking until they were all collected. Rahim Ullah then called them up to the roof and shortly explained what was on foot, and pointed out to them the spot in the nullah which he had selected for the ambush. After this he divided the band into two equal parties, one to be under himself and the other to be under one Ali Sher, the man who acted as his lieutenant when any detachment of forces became necessary.

"Together we will move down to the selected point to-night and, arrived there, I will show each man his place. Then we will divide: those with me will hide in the shadow of the Takht, while the companions of Ali Sher will hide in the nullahs of the lesser hill. One man alone on each side will keep watch. The sepoys will pass us in the morning and will be left unharmed. In the midst of the third watch we will creep forth and take up our positions, and by the end of that watch the infidels will surely come, sleepy with their long day in the sunshine and thinking only of their evening meal. Let every man aim well and keep his sights low, remembering that the bullet that misses is the bullet that flies high and not that which goes low. Shoot straight, I say, brethren, and by this time to-morrow each man of us will have a new Government rifle worth a full thousand rupees and enough ammunition to last us many days."

By three o'clock next evening

every man was in position, lying with his eyes on the track, where it ran thirty or forty yards beneath him. Each was ready, on the approach of the unconscious enemy, to drop quietly down and lie hidden until the leader's shot gave the signal. The place was one with small features on either side. The nullah, narrowed down to a width of ten yards, suddenly widened into an open bay, fifty yards across, and then narrowed again to ten or twelve yards. On the Takht side of the bay was a flat-topped cliff, sheer and inaccessible, and along the edge of this, thirty feet above the track, there lay Rahim Ullah and twelve rifles. Opposite to them there ran a semicircular ridge, nearly twice as high, formed of the coloured clay which has been described, so steep that a man with time to dig in his toes might just climb it slowly. Its edge was quite sharp, but the twelve rifles that lined it had made places for their feet, and with this help they lay there easily enough awaiting their foe.

At half-past three the Indian officer in command fell in his men for the march home. Two men he sent ahead as advanced guard, two men he dropped as rearguard, and having done so started off, satisfied that all necessary precautions had been taken. The detached files were not fifty yards away, and might as well have been with the rest. The men walked along, chatting and laughing, with magazines uncharged and some with rifles slung. They had come and gone so often, and what was there to fear? They were men who had soldiered near their homes in the South, and for them the menace of the Frontier did not exist.

A single shot shattered the stillness of the quiet afternoon, and then a rapid fusilade broke out on both sides. The soldiers had broken into two parties, twenty yards apart. In the first were eight men and the Indian officer. Almost on the moment seven of the privates fell. The Indian officer and one man remained alive. The sepoy hurled himself on to the ground, face foremost, and lay still as the red figures around him; the officer drew his revolver and faced—nothing. He bravely stood there and fired several shots up at the cliff, and actually survived for some seconds, and then the inevitable happened, and another brave man had passed to his forebears.

Of the second party of twelve, several survived the first outburst of fire, and seeing that the heaviest of the fire was in front turned back to flee. Not one of them got out of the fatal little bay. Two tried to climb the steep clay, and one, wounded near its foot, wounded again half-way up, reached the crest only to have a rifle emptied into his face. The two advanced sepoys were still in the bay when the firing opened. One died. The second, shot in the thigh, hobbled down the nullah bleeding terribly, until a second bullet, striking him in the neck, brought him down screaming with a horrid gurgle

of blood. The rear sepoys were outside the little embayment. They ran forward to their comrades, and one of them went on until he came into the zone of fire and fell, as all who stood there fell, with a carefully-placed shot through him. The second started with his comrade, but the sight of the death he saw before him was too much for his nerves, and, casting down his rifle in utter panic, he fled screaming the way he had come.

The survey party, unarmed as they were, stood still for the short time needed to settle their fate, and the surveyor and four of his five helpers died. The fifth, himself a Waziri, stood with his hands raised in supplication and was spared, and he alone of the thirty men who were there stood on his feet, while the sepoy who had thrown himself down lay quivering with terrible fear among the dead and dying, and the escaped man ran panting and sobbing into the heart of the hills.

The firing ceased. Rahim Ullah rose, and the movement was the sign for all to move. Rahim Ullah found his way down to the nullah. He passed the surveyor coolie, who stood with his hands still in supplication, and passing him he slashed him lightly across the face with a long knife he had drawn, calling out to him—

"What do you mean by making a road in my country?"

Each man seized a rifle. Each man cut the braces and belts of the nearest fallen man and lifted his pouches and straps clear from him. One man performed this office for the unharmed man who lay on the ground, and he, almost dead with fear, kept still as the very dead themselves.

The looting took scarcely two minutes to accomplish, and the gang, led by their captain, ran as one man down the nearest narrow cleft, which led to the base of the Takht, and disappeared from view, and the next moment the place was given over to silence again.

The wounded coolie sat on the stones, staunching the blood that dripped from his face, and presently the sepoy rose shakily and came and sat beside him. No other moved, for all were dead. Almost at once the noise of the blue-bottle flies was heard as they busied themselves with their suddenly provided feast, while the strongly acrid smell of freshly shed blood was almost overpowering in that closed-in place.

The two made their way back to Killa, and half-an-hour later the wires were flashing the news all over India. At dusk the following evening a wearied sepoy reached the post, his puggri lost, his hair hanging loose over his face, his clothes in rags, and, throwing himself down in the first corner he came to, lay down to sleep the sleep of exhaustion.

The incident of the raid was ended.

III. RETRIBUTION.

At Saranai Post all was quiet. The ordinary routine duties of the evening had been finished, the men who had been on duty guarding the water supply were just withdrawing, and the quarter-guard was on the point of closing the main gate, when a man was seen advancing openly along the road. At a word from the non-commissioned officer of the guard, the men who were closing the gate desisted from their task for the moment.

The man was coming at a fast gait, running some yards and then breaking into a walk to recover his breath, and in a very few minutes he was close up and was answering the inquiries of the N.C.O. He must see the Sahib in command of the post. He had news. No, he would say nothing to any one else, and he knew his news was worth hearing.

A man was sent off to the officer commanding.

Major Tom Blackwood, who was commanding the post, was also temporarily commanding his regiment, and hoped to be confirmed in that position in a few weeks. He was, first and last, a Frontier soldier, brought up in a regiment of the old Frontier Force, and he had been pushed on for no trick of manner, for no staff work in an office, but for regimental soldiering across and along the border. The Saranai detachment was also the headquarters of the regiment, the remainder of the regiment being posted in two other smaller places. It was still the leave season, and the calls for officers had been very heavy for various causes, and Blackwood found himself with only one other officer in the post besides himself.

The orderly found the officer in the little mess-hut, turning over the English papers, and delivered his message.

"All right, tell the havildar I'll be along in a minute," he called out, and presently he found himself at the gate facing the strange man. The fellow was a splendid Waziri, quite young, and a tall and fearless-looking man, with the fair skin of a dweller in the upper hills. He had him brought in and asked him his business. He replied, telling the story of the raid, which he said he himself had seen from a position on the Takht.

"Sahib," he said, "you are too late for anything but revenge. I have no sympathy with these raiders who bring war on my country by their deeds, and I think I can give you revenge if you want it. You will need two parties, for the raiders will move up one of two nullahs, and I cannot tell which; but they have been out all day, and part of last night, and they have been travelling to-night as well, and they will certainly halt at one of two springs. One column I will

guide, and if you have a spy, I can tell him to guide the other column to that second spring."

"And how am I to tell that you are a true man?"

"You cannot tell, sahib, but my life will be in your hands. Tie me up if you will. I care not, so that you find the raiders."

"And your reward?"

"I am no spy, sahib, and I ask no reward but that you may be successful."

Blackwood gave orders that the man should be taken care of, and immediately sent instructions that the whole garrison, except such as should be needed for guarding the post, should fall in, with 100 rounds of ammunition and one day's rations, as quickly as possible. Then he went across to the hut of the only other officer he had with him, who was in bed with fever. He found him lying half asleep, with the bed-clothes piled on top of him, evidently in the ague stage.

"I say, Sangster," he said, sitting down on a chair by the bed, "I have just had a man in here who says that Rahim Ullah has lain up for the Survey Party of the 200th Infantry, and that they have been all killed or wounded but two men."

"That's pretty bad, sir," replied the junior; "it's just what you said would happen, isn't it? But why have you had no wire yet? We should hear pretty quickly if it's a true bill."

As he spoke there came a knock at the door, and Blackwood found a man with a yellow telegraph-form addressed to him.

"Survey party attacked," it ran; "all killed but one sepoy one coolie. Stop passes."

"The usual thing," said Blackwood. "Stop passes, as if I could stop fifty roads with four companies. But this time, with my friend here saying he'll guide us, we may have some luck. Anyhow, I am going to have a try. I wish you weren't knocked up."

"Knocked up be hanged," said the junior, with more energy than respect. "I'm coming anyhow, and the fever will have to take its chance. It wasn't so very bad either. I'll be with you in half a moment, sir."

Fifteen minutes later a column of two hundred men wound silently out of the post. It was quite dark, and the enterprise of marching a good many miles in the dark, along the narrow paths and defiles of that rugged country, was not one to be lightly undertaken. But both men and officers were past-masters at the game. Many of the men were themselves Frontier Pathans, and the remainder were Sikhs and Punjabis trained on the border to guard their heads against a subtle and cunning foe. It was still dark when they reached a point known to none of them but their guides, where the two nullahs parted, and where the parties had to divide.

"Good luck, old chap," whis-

pered the older man, "I hope you will get into them."

"Thank you, sir," said Sangster, "I hope we may score off them between us, anyhow."

The big Waziri went with the last speaker. The party moved up a ravine with steep sides. The darkness in this shut-in place was intense. No sound was heard except the gentle tramp of the men as they wound cautiously along in the ranks, and the occasional sound of a stumble, as a piece of rough ground took some man by surprise. Presently they came to an opening where a side valley ran into the main feature. The guide stopped, and the whole body of troops halted automatically.

"We have arrived, sahib," he said in a low whisper. "Five hundred yards up this side nullah there is a spring. Beyond the spring is a precipice, up which none may climb. Send therefore men to climb slowly and carefully the ridge above the spring. Others must stop the mouth of the nullah, so that to flee the men must climb up. Sahib, if your men can be in position by dawn, and none know of it, we shall let none escape."

"That's all right," said Sangster, "but how do you know that they are here?"

"I don't know, sahib, but if the Presence will walk with me alone, or with one or two careful men, round the rocky corner there, we may see their fire, and if no fire now burns, we must trust to it that they are here, for we cannot approach the spring up the nullah unseen. They may not be here. I cannot say that they are, but I know that there are but two watering places near here, and at one they will surely stop, so that if not we, then the other party will find them."

"Very well, I'll come with you," replied the Englishman, and calling up the Indian officer near him he told him he was going forward. He nodded, and the two moved on until they came to the rocky spur which formed the outer barrier of the small nullah. They climbed up this a few feet, until they could look up the little valley; to look up indeed, but to see nothing in that Cimmerian gloom except —and Sangster's heart gave a great leap as he saw it—the dull red glow of a fire which had been allowed to die down to a heap of embers. Even as they looked the fire was stirred, and a figure was faintly visible in the glow which came from it.

It was enough. The situation was clear as crystal. The nullah mouth must be stopped, the party at the spring must be dominated by men on the hill above. No one could escape forward, the guide said. If the entrance were held, the thieves must climb the hills. But the hills were both steep and high, and the shooting would be bad if any got away.

Sangster had two weak companies. One he posted under its Indian commander on the high ground overlook-

ing the entrance, and told him to hold his fire until the enemy got close, so as to damage him as much as possible. The other he took himself and, with the guide, climbed slowly and noiselessly, replacing every loose stone that turned under the foot, avoiding the skyline, taking a minute for five yards rather than give the enemy a sound to hear.

There was no light to move or see by when they got into what they hoped was the position, but the first paling of the sky towards dawn was just making itself felt. From then the light came apace, and soon the huddle of figures lying round the spring was faintly visible. Presently a man stirred and sat up to smoke, taking a live coal from the fire to light the tobacco in the little earthen tobacco-holder he used. The blue cloud of smoke showed plainly, and the sound of his coughing came faintly through the chill air of dawn. Man after man began to rouse, and presently the whole gang was gathered round the fire, eating their morning meal and collecting their goods preparatory to making a start. Sangster crept back a pace and then beckoned to his men, and they, thanks to their years of careful training, crept forward inch by inch, until their eyes were looking down on the group two hundred feet below. Sangster saw an old soldier seize a too anxious recruit by the back of the neck and bury his face in the earth, and found himself smiling in spite of the tension.

All was ready, and the light was quite good enough for shooting. At the fire below a smallish man rose to his feet, and the others at once began to stir.

Sangster gave the word in a quiet tone, and as he did so the small man looked up and saw. He gave a loud shout, and commenced running towards the mouth of the nullah, while a storm of lead deprived him in one moment of half his followers. The guide beside Sangster was muttering to himself, and turning quickly, Sangster saw his face, with gleaming black eyes, working savagely as he followed the small man's movements.

"Aha, my enemy," he was saying through his tight shut teeth. "This time thou shalt not escape the death thou has dealt on all around thee. To-day, at last, after the years, shall I look on thy face in death."

Sangster had no time to listen. Standing up, he directed his men's fire. Eight of the enemy got close to the mouth of the nullah, led by the small man, when suddenly from the rocks in their front there came a sheet of lead which seemed to kill every one of them. But no! One figure fell indeed for the moment, but the next instant was on his feet again. The rush had almost brought him through the passage, and now he was in the narrow entry itself, and now he was through and speeding down the main nullah, the centre of a wide circle of bullets which followed him as he went. Almost he had escaped,

when suddenly he began to halt on one leg and then to hobble slowly and more slowly, until, standing still for one moment, he quietly sank down.

Sangster had seen it all. So too had his guide, whose muttered imprecations and laboured breath told what he was passing through.

As the small figure went down he sprang up and ran madly down the hill, and the Englishman, impelled by curiosity, followed him at top speed.

The man was *in articulo* when they arrived, with fast glazing eyes and hurried little breaths. The big Waziri was speaking to him when Sangster got up.

"Rahim Ullah, Rahim Ullah," he was saying, "listen ere you die and I will tell you a thing. Look, see this cloth. Dost thou remember it? It was thine, and it was filled with flat stones in place of rupees, one day many years agone. Ah! I see that thou dost in very truth remember; remember both the snider rifle and the man thou did'st shoot. His son am I. I traced thee by the rifle which thou did'st sell to Gunja, who sold it to Sayed Ali, who is my cousin. By this did I know thee, who thou wert. Too strong had'st thou grown by then, and I must wait and spy till the time came when the strong hand of the Government has given me my vengeance. Thou evil murderer of thine own race, the deepest abyss awaits thy black soul, thou who hast killed a true son of the Prophet, who did slay but according to the holy commandment."

The dying man opened his eyes widely and summoned his breath with a last effort.

"It is just, thou son of my first victim, whose name I never knew. It is right and just that I should die by thy hand and not by that of another. Allah is great, Allah is one, and Mahommed is his prophet."

He stopped speaking with a slight croaking sound, which the hearers both knew well. His head went back, he lay with open mouth and half-shut eyes; and Rahim Ullah, the Raiding Wazir, had passed, with all his gang.

SHERIDAN RICE.

ADVENTURES OF A DESPATCH RIDER.

THE FIGHTING ROUND LA BASSÉE.

I. THE RUSH TO THE NORTH.

Our entraining at Pont St Maxence began with a carouse and ended with a cumulative disappointment. In the middle was the usual wait, a tiresome but necessary part of all military evolutions. To entrain a Signal Company sounds so simple. Here is the company —there is the train. But first comes the man-handling of cable-carts on to trucks that were built for the languid conveyance of perambulators. Then follows a little horse-play, and only those who, like myself, regard horses as unmechanical and self-willed instruments of war, know how terrifying a sight and how difficult a task the emboxing of a company's horses can be. Motor-cycles are heavy and have to be lifted, but they do not make noises and jib and rear, and look every moment as if they were going to fall backward on to the interested spectator.

We despatch riders fetched a great deal of straw and made ourselves comfortable in one of those waggons that are marked outside, with such splendid optimism—

Chevaux . . 8
Hommes . . 40-5

With our friend the Post-Sergeant and his underling there were roughly a dozen of us and no superfluity of space, but, seeing men wandering fiercely up and down the train under the command of our Sergeant-Major, we took in a H.Q. clerk. This ruffled us, but it had to be done. The Sergeant-Major came to our waggon. We stood at the door and pointed out to him that we had in our waggon not only all the despatch riders, but also the whole of the Postal and Headquarters Staffs. He said nothing to us—only told ten more men to get in. Finally we were twenty-five in all, with full equipment. Thinking of the 40-5 we settled down and managed to effect a compromise of room, which, to our amazement, left us infinitely more comfortable than we had been in the III^{me} coming up from Havre to Landrecies.

The train shuffled out of the station just before dawn. We slept a bit, and then, just as it was getting light, started our pipes and began to talk of the future. The general opinion favoured Ostend, though a sergeant hazarded that we were going to be shipped swiftly across to England to defend the East Coast. This suggestion was voted impossible and tactless — at least, we didn't put it quite like that. Ostend it was going to be—train to Abbéville, and then boat to Ostend, and a rapid march

against the German flank. The discussion was interrupted by somebody saying he had heard from somebody who had been told by his Major, that 60,000 Germans had been killed in the last two days, Von Kluck had been killed by a lucky shell, and the Crown Prince had committed suicide. We were bringing the cynicism of youth to bear on the trustfulness of a mature mercenary when the train arrived at Amiens.

Some washed. Some meditated on a train of French wounded and another train of Belgian refugees, humble and pitiful objects, very smelly. Two, not waiting for orders, rushed to the buffet and bought beer and sardines and chocolate and bread. One of these was cut off from his waggon by a long goods train that passed through, but he knew the ways of military trains, waited till the goods had passed, then ran after us and caught us up after a mile's jog-trot. The good people of Amiens, who had not so very long before been delivered from the Germans, were exceedingly affectionate, and threw us fruit, flowers, and kisses. Those under military age shrieked at the top of their shrill little trebles—

Engleesh—Tipperary—Biskeet—Biskeet—Souvenir. We have never understood the cry of "Biskeet." The fat little fellows were obviously well nourished. Perhaps, dog-like, they buried their biscuits with a thought for the time when the English should be forgotten and hunger should take their place as something very present.

So joyously we were rushed north at about five miles an hour, or eight kilometres per hour, which sounds better. Early in the afternoon we came to Abbéville, a hot and quiet station, and, with the aid of some London Scottish, disembarked. From these Scots we learnt that the French were having a hot time just north of Arras, that train-load upon train-load of wounded had come through, that our Corps (the 2nd) was going up to help. So even now we do not know whether we really were going to Ostend and were diverted to the La Bassée district to help the French who had got themselves into a hole, or whether Ostend was somebody's little tale.

We rode through the town to the Great Barracks, where we were given a large and clean ward. The washing arrangements were sumptuous and we had truckle-beds to sleep upon, but the sanitation, as everywhere in France, was vile. We kicked a football about on the drill-ground. Then some of us went down into the town, while the rest of us watched impatiently for them to come back, taking a despatch or two in the meanwhile. From the despatch rider's point of view Abbéville is a large and admiring town, with good restaurants and better baths. These baths were finer than the baths of Havre—full of sweet-scented odours and the deliciously intoxicating fumes of good soap and plenteous

boiling - water. In a little restaurant we met some friends of the 3rd Division and a couple of London Scots, who were getting heartily sick of the L. of C., though taking prisoners round the outskirts of Paris had, I gather, its charm even for the most ardent warriors.

In the morning there was parade, a little football, and then a stroll into the town. I had just finished showing an Intelligence Officer how to get a belt back on to the pulley of his motor-cycle when Cecil B—— met me and told me we were to move north that evening. We had a delectable little tea, bought a map or two, and then strolled back to the barracks. In half an hour we were ready to move off, kit piled high upon our carriers, looking for all the world (said our C.O.) like those funny little animals that carry their houses upon their backs and live at the bottom of ponds. Indeed it was our boast that—such was our ingenuity—we were able to carry more kit than any regimental officer.

It was dusk when D—— and I pushed off,—we had remained behind to deal with messages that might come in foolishly after the Division had left. We took the great high-road to Calais, and, carefully passing the general, who was clattering along with his staff and an escort of Hussars, we pulled up to light our lamps at a little estaminet with glowing red blinds just like the blinds of certain hospitable taverns in the city of Oxford. The coincidence was so remarkable that we were compelled to enter. We found a roaring, leaping log-fire, a courteous old Frenchman who drank our healths, an immense omelette, some particularly good coffee, and the other despatch riders.

That night it was freezing hard. With our chairs drawn in close to the fire, a glass of something to keep the cold out ready to hand, and pipes going strong, we felt sorry for the general and his escort who, probably with chilled lips and numbed fingers, jogged resoundingly through the village street.

Twenty minutes later we took the road, and soon, pretending that we had lost our way, again passed the general—and lost our way, or at least rode well past our turning. Finally, colder than we had ever been before, we reached the Chateau at Gueschart. There we found a charming and hospitable son of the house and a pleasantly adoring lad. With their aid we piled the floor of the harness-room with straw, and those of us who were not on duty slept finely.

From the dawn of the next morning we were working at top pressure right through the day, keeping in touch with the brigades which were billeted in villages several miles distant.

Late in the afternoon we discovered we were very short of petrol, so I was sent off to Crécy in our famous captured car, with a requisition. We arrived amidst cheers. I strode into the nearest garage and demanded 100 litres of petrol. It was humbly brought and

placed in the car: then I sent boys flying round the town for jam and bread and butter, and in the meantime we entertained the crowd by showing them a German helmet. I explained volubly that my bandaged fingers—there was an affair of outposts with an ambulance near Serches—were the work of shrapnel, and they nearly embraced me. A boy came back and said there was no jam, so the daughter of the house went to her private cupboard and brought me out two jars of jam she had made herself, and an enormous glass of wine. We drove off amidst more cheers, to take the wrong road out of the town in our great excitement.

The brigades moved that night; headquarters remained at Gueschart until dawn, when the general started off in his car with two of us attendant. Now before the war a motor-cyclist would consider himself ill-used if he were forced to take a car's dust for a mile or so. Your despatch rider was compelled to follow in the wake of a large and fast Daimler for twenty-five miles, and at the end of it he did not know which was him and which was dust. We came upon the 15th, shivering in the morning cold, and waiting for some French motor-buses. Then we rushed on to St Pol, which was crammed full of French transport and on to Chateau Bryas. Until the other despatch riders came up there was no rest for the two of us that had accompanied the car. The roads, too, were blocked with refugees flying south from Lille and men of military age who had been called up. Once again we heard the distant sound of guns—for the first time since we had been at the Chateau of Longpont.

At last we were relieved for an hour, and taking possession of a kitchen we fried some pork-chops with onions and potatoes. It was grand. We washed them down with coffee, and went back to duty. For the remainder of that day and for the whole of the night there was no rest for us.

At dawn the Division marched in column of route north-east towards the sound of the guns. Half of us at a time slipped away and fed in stinking taverns—but the food was good. I cannot remember a hotter day, and we were marching through a thickly-populated mining district — the villages were uncomfortably like those round Dour. The people were enthusiastic and generous with their fruit and with their chocolate. It was very tiring work, because we were compelled to ride with the Staff, for first one of us was needed and then another to take messages up and down the column or across country to brigades and divisions that were advancing along roads parallel to ours. The old Division was making barely one mile an hour. The road was blocked by French transport coming in the opposite direction, by 'buses drawn up at the side of the road, and by cavalry that, trekking from the Aisne, crossed our front continuously to take up their position away on the left.

At last, about three o'clock in the afternoon, we reached the outskirts of Béthune. The sound of the guns was very near, and to the east of the town we could see an aeroplane haloed in bursting shrapnel. The Staff took refuge first in an unsavoury field and afterwards in a little house. Despatch after despatch until evening—and then, ordered to remain behind to direct others, and cheered by the sight of our most revered and most short-sighted staff-officer walking straight over a little bridge into a deep, muddy, and stinking ditch, I took refuge in the kitchen and experienced the discreeter pleasures of "the Force." The handmaidens brought coffee, and brushed me and washed me and talked to me. I was sorry when the time came for me to resume my beat, or rather to ride with Cecil B—— after the Division.

We passed some Turcos, happy-looking children but ill companions in a hostile country, and some Spahis with flowing burnous, who looked ridiculously out of place, and then after a long search—it was dark on the road and very cold—we found the Division.

I dined off a maconochie, and was wondering whether I dare lie down to sleep, when I was called out to take a message to and remain at the 13th Brigade. It was a bad night. Never was a man so cold in his life, and the brigade had taken up its quarters in a farm situated in the centre of a very labyrinth of country roads. But I had four hours' sleep when I got there, while the others were up all the night.

There was no hurry in the morning. The orders were to join the Division at a bridge just outside Béthune, a point which they could not possibly reach before ten. So I got up late and had a glorious meal of soup, omelette, and fruit in the town, waited on by a most excellent flapper who wanted to know everything about everything. I reported at the Signal Office, then occupying the lodge of the town cemetery, and was sent off to catch the Devons. At the village where I waited for them I found some Cuirassiers, genial fellows; but living helios in the burning sun. When I returned the Division had moved along the north bank of the Canal to Beuvry Station. The post picked us up, and in the joyous possession of two parcels and some letters I unpacked my kit. We all settled down on some moderately clean straw in the waiting-room of the station, and there we remained for three full weeks.

II. ROUND LA BASSÉE.

Men talk of the battle of Ypres[1] as the finest achievement of the British Army. There was one brigade there

[1] The first—in October and November.

that had a past. It had fought at Mons and Le Cateau, and then plugged away cheerfully through the Retreat and the Advance. What was left of it had fought stiffly on the Aisne. Some hard marching, a train journey, more hard marching, and it was thrown into action at La Bassée. There it fought itself to a standstill. It was attacked and attacked until, shattered, it was driven back one wild night. It was rallied, and turning on the enemy held them. More hard marching —a couple of days' rest, and it staggered into action at Ypres, and somehow—no one knows how—it held its bit of line. A brigade called by the same name, consisting of the same regiments, commanded by the same general, but containing scarce a man of those who had come out in August, marched very proudly away from Ypres and went—not to rest—but to hold another bit of the line.

And this brigade was not the Guards Brigade. There were no picked men in the brigade. It contained just four ordinary regiments of the line — the Norfolks, the Bedfords, the Cheshires, and the Dorsets. What the 15th Brigade did, other brigades have done.

Now little has been heard of this fighting round La Bassée in October, so I wish I could tell you about it in more detail than I can. To my thinking it was the finest fighting I have seen.

You will understand, then, how difficult it is for me to describe the country round La Bassée. I might describe it as it appeared to me when first we arrived—sunny and joyous, with many little farms and thick hedges and rare factories—or as I saw it last, on a horrible yellowish evening, shattered and black and flooded and full of ghosts.

From Béthune to La Bassée is a matter of about six miles. The two are connected by a canal which runs straight until it approaches La Bassée, when it turns a trifle to the north. About the country south of the canal I do not know very much, because it was held by the French. South of Beuvry Station is Beuvry, a large and prosperous but straggling and ugly village. From Beuvry a road runs parallel with the canal through Annequin, and then approaching the canal to Cuinchy, beyond which there is a tangle of brickfields, railway embankments, slag-heaps, and mining paraphernalia. Beyond Cuinchy the chief obstacle is the famous Triangle formed by railway embankments, a beautifully defensible position. Across the canal at Cuinchy there is a permanent bridge, from which the road runs north-west to Festubert. Several miles south and a trifle east of Cuinchy lies Vermelles, a village containing a keep in the form of a chateau, the whole very strongly fortified by the Germans. South of the canal, then, remember these two points—the Triangle beyond

Cuinchy and the fortified position of Vermelles.

The country both north of the canal and south is flat and marshy, and full of houses and detached factories.

Beuvry itself consists of a street of houses, and a large brewery. Along the road a mile or so due north are the cross-roads and chateau of Gorre. Two miles and a half farther on, over rich and desolate country covered with filthy farms, is Festubert—E.N.E. of Beuvry. Imagine, then, a triangle, with the canal for its base, and the roads from Beuvry to Festubert, and from Festubert to the bridge at Cuinchy, for its two sides.

If you had walked before the war along the road from Festubert to Cuinchy you would have seen (when you were about half-way between those two places) a village on your left. It is placed on what looks like a detached hill. The church can be seen for miles round, and the houses are built of red brick. That is Givenchy-lez-La Bassée. You strolled up into Givenchy. In front of you there were two miles of absolutely open country, and beyond a compact town full of big buildings, lying round a large church—La Bassée. On your left the country was open and rolling. You marked the line of a main road—obviously a main road because of the poplars—running N.W. On this main road, and three-quarters of a mile out from La Bassée, was an immense sugar factory. Just off the road and to the south of it (about five hundred yards from the factory and a thousand from the last house in the town), you could have seen a little stone village, with a fine square tower rising from the middle. It was built on a slope, and the village straggled down the hill. Nearer to you than the village, but on the side of the village away from the town, there were some clustered houses bordering tangled country roads, and beyond these houses you could have looked over marshy country, divided up by ditches and lines of willows and poplars. In the sunlight it is brown, and on a cloudy day it is grey. The village was Violaines, and the clustered houses were the Rue de Marais and Quinque Rue. The main road runs just west of Neuve Chapelle, and north to Estaires.

North of the canal keep in your mind Givenchy on a hill, Violaines just off the La Bassée-Estaires road, and the country just in front of La Bassée, flat plough and pasture, without a scrap of cover.

Now when first we arrived news filtered through to us that La Bassée was held only by a division of Jägers, plentifully supplied with artillery and machine guns. I believe this was the fact. The Jägers held on stubbornly until reinforcements came up. Instead of attacking we were hard pressed, and had more than we could do to prevent the Germans in their turn from breaking through. Indeed we had not a kick left in us when the Division was relieved.

At the beginning it looked so simple. The British Army was wheeling round on to the German right flank. We had the shortest distance to go, because we formed the extreme British right. On our left was the 3rd Division, and beyond the 3rd was the First Corps. On the left of the First the Third Corps was sweeping on to Armentières. Then Antwerp fell suddenly. The First Corps was rushed up to help the Seventh Division which was trying to guard the right flank of the Belgians in retirement along the coast. Thus some sort of very weak line was formed from the sea to La Bassée. The Germans, reinforced by the men, and more particularly by the guns that the fall of Antwerp had let loose, attacked violently at Ypres and La Bassée. I do not say this is what really happened. I am trying to tell you what we thought was happening.

Think of us, then, in the heat of early October going into action on the left of the French, confident that we had just a little opposition to brush away in front of us before we concentrated in the Square at La Bassée.

At first the 13th Brigade was put into position south of the canal, the 15th Brigade attacked from the canal to the La Bassée-Estaires road, and the 14th from the main road roughly to the Richebourgs. In the second stage the French extended their line to the Canal, and the 13th became a reserve brigade. In the third stage we had every man in the line—the 13th Brigade being split up between the 14th and 15th, and the French sent two battalions to the north bank of the canal.

The work of the despatch riders was of two kinds. Three-quarters of us rode between the divisional and the brigade headquarters. The rest were attached to the brigades, and either used for miscellaneous work or held in reserve so that communication might not be broken if the wires were cut or smashed by shells. One motor-cyclist went out every day to Lieutenant C——,who was acting as liaison officer with the French. This job never fell to my lot, but I am told it was exciting enough. The French General was an intrepid old fellow, who believed that a general should be near his fighting men. So his headquarters were always being shelled. Then he would not retire, but preferred to descend into the cellar until the evil times were overpast. The despatch rider with C—— had his bellyfull of shells. It was pleasant to sit calmly in a cellar and receive food at the hands of an accomplished *chef*, and in more peaceful times there was opportunity to study the idiosyncrasies of German gunners and the peculiar merits of the Soixante-Quinze. But when the shelling was hottest there was usually work for the despatch rider — and getting away from the unhealthy area before scooting down the Annequin road was a heart-thumping job.

French generals were always considerate and hospitable to us despatch riders. On our arrival at Béthune T—— was sent off with a message to a certain French Corps Commander. The General received him with a proper French embrace, congratulated him on our English bravery, and set him down to some food and a glass of good wine. The despatch riders attached to C—— were always provided with excellent meals by special order of the General.

It was at La Bassée that we had our first experience of utterly unrideable roads. North of the canal the roads were fair macadam in dry weather and to the south the main road Béthune–Beuvry–Annequin was of the finest pavé. Then it rained hard. First the roads became greasy beyond belief. Starting was perilous, and the slightest injudicious swerve meant a bad skid. Between Gorre and Festubert the road was vile. It went on raining, and the roads were thickly covered with glutinous mud. The front mud-guard of George's Douglas choked up with a lamentable frequency. The Blackburn alone, the finest and most even-running of all motor-cycles,[1] ran with unswerving regularity. Finally, to our heart-burning sorrow, there were nights on which motor-cycling became impossible, and we stayed restlessly at home while men on the despised horse carried our despatches. This we could not allow for long. Soon we became so skilled that, if I remember correctly, it was only on half a dozen nights in all right through the winter that the horsemen were required.

It was at La Bassée too that we had our second casualty. A despatch rider whom we called "Moulders" came in one evening full of triumph. A bullet had just grazed his leg and the Government was compelled to provide him with a new puttee. We were jealous, and he was proud.

III. WITH THE 15TH BRIGADE.

It had been a melancholy day, full of rain and doubting news. Those of us who were not "out" were strolling up and down the platform arranging a succession of cakes from home and trying to gather from the sound of the gunning and intermittent visits to the Signal Office what was happening. Some one had been told that the old 15th was

[1] This is not an unthinking advertisement. After despatch riding from August 16 to February 18 my judgment should be worth something. I am firmly convinced that if the Government could have provided all despatch riders with Blackburns, the percentage—at all times small—of messages undelivered owing to mechanical breakdowns or the badness of the roads would have been reduced to zero. I have no interest in the Blackburn Company beyond a sincere admiration of the machine it produces.

hard pressed. Each of us regretted loudly that we had not been attached to it, though our hearts spoke differently. Despatch riders have muddled thoughts. There is a longing for the excitement of danger and a very earnest desire to keep away from it.

The C.O. walked on to the platform hurriedly, and in a minute or two I was off. It was lucky that the road was covered with unholy grease, that the light was bad and there was transport on the road—for it is not good for a despatch rider to think too much of what is before him. My instructions were to report to the general and make myself useful. I was also cheerfully informed that the H.Q. of the 15th were under a robust shell-fire. Little parties of sad-looking wounded that I passed, the noise of the guns, and the evil dusk heartened me.

I rode into Festubert, which was full of noise, and, very hastily dismounting, put my motor-cycle under the cover of an arch and reported to the general. He was sitting at a table in the stuffy room of a particularly dirty tavern. At the far end a fat and frightened woman was crooning to her child. Beside her sat a wrinkled, leathery old man with bandaged head. He had wandered into the street, and he had been cut about by shrapnel. The few wits he had ever possessed were gone, and he gave every few seconds little croaks of hate. Three telephone operators were working with strained faces at their highest speed. The windows had been smashed by shrapnel, and bits of glass and things crunched under foot. The room was full of noises—the crackle of the telephones, the crooning of the woman, the croak of the wounded old man, the clear and incisive tones of the general and his brigade-major, the rattle of not too distant rifles, the booming of guns and occasionally the terrific, overwhelming crash of a shell bursting in the village.

I was given a glass of wine. C——, the Brigade Signal officer, and the Veterinary officer, came up to me and talked cheerfully in whispered tones about our friends.

There was the sharp cry of shrapnel in the street and a sudden rattle against the whole house. The woman and child fled somewhere through a door, followed feebly by the old man. The brigade-major persuaded the general to work in some less unhealthy place. The telephone operators moved. A moment's delay as the general endeavoured to persuade the brigade-major to go first, and we found ourselves under a stalwart arch that led into the courtyard of the tavern. We lit pipes and cigarettes. The crashes of bursting shells grew more frequent, and the general remarked in a dry and injured tone—

"Their usual little evening shoot before putting up the shutters, I suppose."

But first the Germans "searched" the village. Now to search a village means to start at one end of the village and place shells at discreet

intervals until the other end of the village is reached. It is an unpleasant process for those in the middle of the village, even though they be standing, as we were, in comparatively good shelter. We heard the Germans start at the other end of the village street. The crashes came nearer and nearer, until a shell burst with a scream and a thunderous roar just on our right. We puffed away at our cigarettes for a second, and a certain despatch rider wished he were anywhere but in the cursed village of Festubert by Béthune. There was another scream and overwhelming relief. The next shell burst three houses away on our left. I knocked my pipe out and filled another.

The Germans finished their little evening shoot. We marched back very slowly in the darkness to 1910 Farm.

This farm was neither savoury nor safe. It was built round a courtyard which consisted of a gigantic hole crammed with manure in all the stages of unpleasant putrefaction. One side is a barn; two sides consist of stables, and the third is the house inhabited not only by us but by an incredibly filthy and stinking old woman who was continually troubling the general because some months ago a French cuirassier took one of her chickens. The day after we arrived at this farm I had few despatches to take, so I wrote to Robert. Here is some of the letter and bits of other letters I wrote during the following days. They will give you an idea of our state of mind.[1]

If you want something of the dramatic—I am writing in a farm under shrapnel fire, smoking a pipe that was broken by a shell. For true effect I suppose I should not tell you that the shrapnel is bursting about fifty yards the other side of the house, that I am in a room lying on the floor, and consequently that, so long as they go on firing shrapnel, I am perfectly safe.

It's the dismallest of places. Two miles farther back the heavies are banging away over our heads. There are a couple of batteries near the farm. Two miles along the road the four battalions of our brigade are holding on for dear life in their trenches.

The country is open plough, with little clumps of trees, sparse hedges, and isolated cottages giving a precarious cover. It's all very damp and miserable, for it was raining hard last night and the day before.

I am in a little bare room with the floor covered with straw. Two telegraph operators are making that infernal jerky clicking sound I have begun so to hate. Half a dozen men of the signal staff are lying about the floor looking at week-old papers. In the next room I can hear the general, seated at a table intent on his map, talking to an

[1] The letters were written on 14th October *et seq.* The censor was kind.

officer that has just come from the firing line. Outside the window a gun is making a fiendish row, shaking the whole house. Occasionally there is a bit of a rattle—that's shrapnel bullets falling on the tiles of an outhouse.

If you came out you might probably find this exhilarating. I have just had a talk with our mutual friend C——, the Signal Officer of this brigade, and we have decided that we are fed up with it. For one thing—after two months' experience of shell fire the sound of a shell bursting within measurable distance makes you start and shiver for a moment — reflex action of the nerves. That is annoying. We both decided we would willingly change places with you and take a turn at defending your doubtless excellently executed trenches at Liberton.

The line to the ——[1] has just gone. It's almost certain death to relay it in the daytime. C—— and his men are discussing the chances while somebody else has started a musical-box. A man has gone out; I wonder if he will come back. The rest of the men have gone to sleep again. That gun outside the window is getting on my nerves. Well, well!

The shrapnel fire appears to have stopped for the present. No, there's a couple together. If they fire over this farm I hope they don't send me back to D.H.Q. Do you know what I long for more than anything else? A clean, unhurried breakfast with spotless napery and shining silver and porridge and kippers. I don't think these long, lazy after-breakfast hours at Oxford were wasted. They are a memory and a hope out here. The shrapnel is getting nearer and more frequent. We are all hoping it will kill some chickens in the courtyard. The laws against looting are so strict.

What an excellent musical-box, playing quite a good imitation of *Cavalleria Rusticana.* I guess we shall have to move soon. Too many shells. Too dark to write any more——

After all, quite the most important things out here are a fine meal and a good bath. If you consider the vast area of the war the facts that we have lost two guns or advanced five miles are of very little importance. War, making one realise the hopeless insignificance of the individual, creates in one such an immense regard for self, that so long as one does well it matters little if four officers have been killed reconnoitring or some wounded have had to be left under an abandoned gun all night. I started with an immense interest in tactics. This has nearly all left me and I remain a more or less efficient despatch-carrying animal—a part of a machine realising the hopeless, enormous size of the machine.

The infantry officer after two months of modern war is a

[1] Dorsets, I think.

curious phenomenon.[1] He is probably one of three survivors of an original twenty-eight. He is not frightened of being killed; he has forgotten to think about it. But there is a sort of reflex fright. He becomes either cautious and liable to sudden panics, or very rash indeed, or absolutely mechanical in his actions. The first state means the approach of a nervous breakdown, the second a near death. There are very few, indeed, who retain a nervous balance and a calm judgment. And all have a harsh frightened voice. If you came suddenly out here, you would think they were all mortally afraid. But it is only giving orders for hours together under a heavy fire.

Battle noises are terrific. At the present moment a howitzer is going strong behind this, and the concussion is tremendous. The noise is like dropping a traction-engine on a huge tin tray. A shell passing away from you over your head is like the loud crackling of a newspaper close to your ear. It makes a sort of deep reverberating crackle in the air, gradually lessening, until there is a dull boom, and a mile or so away you see a thick little cloud of white smoke in the air or a pear-shaped cloud of grey-black smoke on the ground. Coming towards you a shell makes a cutting, swishing note, gradually getting higher and higher, louder and louder. There is a longer note one instant and then it ceases. Shrapnel bursting close to you has the worst sound.

It is almost funny in a village that is being shelled. Things simply disappear. You are standing in an archway a little back from the road—a shriek of shrapnel. The windows are broken and the tiles rush clattering into the street, while little bullets and bits of shell jump like red-hot devils from side to side of the street, ricochetting until their force is spent. Or a deeper bang, a crash, and a whole house tumbles down.

¾-hour later. — Curious life this. Just after I had finished the last sentence, I was called out to take a message to a battery telling them to shell a certain village. Here am I wandering out, taking orders for the complete destruction of a village and probably for the death of a couple of hundred men without a thought, except that the roads are very greasy and that lunch time is near. Again, yesterday, I put our Heavies in action, and in a quarter of an hour a fine old church, with what appeared from the distance a magnificent tower, was nothing but a grotesque heap of ruins. The Germans were loopholing it for defence.

Oh the waste, the utter damnable waste of everything out here—men, horses, buildings, cars, everything. Those who talk about war being a salutary discipline are those

[1] I do not say this paragraph is true. It is what I thought on 15th October 1914. The weather was depressing.

who remain at home. In a modern war there is little room for picturesque gallantry or picture-book heroism. We are all either animals or machines, with little gained except our emotions dulled and brutalised and nightmare flashes of scenes that cannot be written about because they are unbelievable. I wonder what difference you will find in us when we come home——

Do you know what a night scare is? In our last H.Q. we were all dining when suddenly there was a terrific outburst of rifle-fire from our lines. We went out into the road that passes the farm and stood there in the pitch darkness, wondering. The fire increased in intensity until every soldier within five miles seemed to be revelling in a lunatic succession of "mad minutes." Was it a heavy attack on our lines? Soon pom-poms joined in sharp, heavy taps — and machine guns. The lines to the battalions were at the moment working feebly, and what the operators could get through was scarcely intelligible. Ammunition limbers were hurried up, and I stood ready to dart anywhere. For twenty minutes the rifle-fire seemed to grow wilder and wilder. At last stretcher-bearers came in with a few wounded and reported that we seemed to be holding our own. Satisfactory so far. Then there were great flashes of shrapnel over our lines; that comforted us, for if your troops are advancing you don't fire shrapnel over the enemy's lines. You never know how soon they may be yours. The firing soon died down until we heard nothing but little desultory bursts. Finally an orderly came — the Germans had half-heartedly charged our trenches but had been driven off with loss. We returned to the farm and found that in the few minutes we had been outside everything had been packed and half-frightened men were standing about for orders. The explanation of it all came later and was simple enough. The French, without letting us know, had attacked the Germans on our right, and the Germans to keep us engaged had made a feint attack upon us. So we went back to dinner.

In modern war the infantryman hasn't much of a chance. Strategy nowadays consists in arranging for the mutual slaughter of infantry by the opposing guns, each general trusting that his guns will do the greater slaughter. And half gunnery is luck. The day before yesterday we had a little afternoon shoot at where we thought the German trenches might be. The Germans unaccountably retreated, and yesterday when we advanced we found the trenches crammed full of dead. By a combination of intelligent anticipation and good luck we had hit them exactly——

From these letters you will be able to gather what mood we were in and something of what the brigade despatch rider was doing. After the first day the Germans ceased

shrapnelling the fields round the farm and left us nearly in peace. There I met Major Ballard, commanding the 15th Artillery Brigade, one of the finest officers of my acquaintance, and Captain Frost, the sole remaining officer of the Cheshires. He was charming to me; I was particularly grateful for the loan of a razor, for my own had disappeared and there were no despatch riders handy from whom I could borrow.

Talking of the Cheshires reminds me of a story illustrating the troubles of a brigadier. The general was dining calmly one night after having arranged an attack. All orders had been sent out. Everything was complete and ready. Suddenly there was a knock at the door and in walked Captain M——, who reported his arrival with 200 reinforcements for the Cheshires, a pleasant but irritating addition. The situation was further complicated by the general's discovery that M—— was senior to the officer then in command of the Cheshires. Poor M—— was not left long in command. A fortnight later the Germans broke through and over the Cheshires, and M—— died where a commanding officer should.

From 1910 Farm I had one good ride to the battalions, through Festubert and along to the Cuinchy bridge. For me it was interesting because it was one of the few times I had ridden just behind our trenches, which at the moment were just north of the road and were occupied by the Bedfords.

In a day or two we returned to Festubert, and C—— gave me a shake-down on a mattress in his billet—gloriously comfortable. The room was a little draughty because the fuse of a shrapnel had gone right through the door and the fireplace opposite. Except for a peppering on the walls and some broken glass the house was not damaged; we almost laughed at the father and mother and daughter who, returning while we were there, wept because their home had been touched.

Orders came to attack. A beautiful plan was drawn up by which the battalions of the brigade were to finish their victorious career in the square of La Bassée. In connection with this attack I was sent with a message for the Devons. It was the blackest of black nights and I was riding without a light. Twice I ran into the ditch, and finally I piled up myself and my bicycle on a heap of stones lying by the side of the road. I did not damage my bicycle. That was enough. I left it and walked. When I got to Cuinchy bridge I found that the Devon headquarters had shifted. Beyond that the sentry knew nothing. Luckily I met a Devon officer who was bringing up ammunition. We searched the surrounding cottages for men with knowledge, and at last discovered that the Devons had moved farther along the canal in the direction of La Bassée. So we set out along

the tow-path, past a house that was burning fiercely enough to make us conspicuous.

We felt our way about a quarter of a mile and stopped, because we were getting near the Germans. Indeed we could hear the rumble of their transport crossing the La Bassée bridge. We turned back, and a few yards nearer home some one coughed high up the bank on our right. We found the cough to be a sentry, and behind the sentry were the Devons.

The attack, as you know, was held up on the line Cuinchy–Givenchy–Violaines; we advanced our headquarters to a house just opposite the inn by which the road to Givenchy turns off. It was not very safe, but the only shell that burst anywhere near the house itself did nothing but wound a little girl in the leg.

On the previous day I had ridden to Violaines at dawn to draw a plan of the Cheshires' trenches for the general. I strolled out by the sugar factory, and had a good look at the red houses of La Bassée. Half an hour later a patrol went out to explore the sugar factory. They did not return. It seems that the factory was full of machine-guns. I had not been fired upon, because the Germans did not wish to give their position away sooner than was necessary.

A day or two later I had the happiness of avenging my potential death. First I took orders to a battery of 6-inch howitzers at the Rue de Marais to knock the factory to pieces, then I carried an observing officer to some haystacks by Violaines, from which he could get a good view of the factory. Finally I watched with supreme satisfaction the demolition of the factory, and with regretful joy the slaughter of the few Germans who, escaping, scuttled for shelter in some trenches just behind and on either side of the factory.

I left the 15th Brigade with regret, and the regret I felt would have been deeper if I had known what was going to happen to the brigade. I was given interesting work and made comfortable. No despatch rider could wish for more.

Not long after I had returned from the 15th Brigade, the Germans attacked and broke through. They had been heavily reinforced and our tentative offensive had been replaced by a stern and anxious defensive.

Now the Signal Office was established in the booking-office of Beuvry Station. The little narrow room was packed full of operators and vibrant with buzz and click. The Signal Clerk sat at a table in a tiny room just off the booking-office. Orderlies would rush in with messages, and the Clerk would instantly decide whether to send them over the wire, by push-cyclist, or by despatch rider. Again, he dealt with all messages that came in over the wire. Copies of these messages were filed.

This was our tape; from them we learned the news. We were not supposed to read them, but, as we often found that they contained information which was invaluable to despatch riders, we always looked through them and each passed on what he had found to the others. The Signal Clerk might not know where a certain unit was at a given moment. We knew, because we had put together information that we had gathered in the course of our rides and information which — though the Clerk might think it unimportant — supplemented or completed or verified what we had already obtained.

So the history of this partially successful attack was known to us. Every few minutes one of us went into the Signal Office and read the messages. When the order came for us to pack up, we had already made our preparations, for Divisional Headquarters, the brain controlling the actions of seventeen thousand men, must never be left in a position of danger. And wounded were pouring into the Field Ambulances.

The enemy had made a violent attack, preluded by heavy shelling, on the left of the 15th, and what I think was a holding attack on the right. Violaines had been stormed, and the Cheshires had been driven, still grimly fighting, to beyond the Rue de Marais. The Norfolks on their right and the K.O.S.B.'s on their left had been compelled to draw back their line with heavy loss, for their flanks had been uncovered by the retreat of the Cheshires. The Germans stopped a moment to consolidate their gains. This gave us time to throw a couple of battalions against them. After desperate fighting Rue de Marais was retaken and some sort of line established. What was left of the Cheshires gradually rallied in Festubert.

This German success, together with a later success against the 3rd Division, that resulted in our evacuation of Neuve Chapelle, compelled us to withdraw and readjust our line. This second line was not so defensible as the first. Until we were relieved the Germans battered at it with gunnery all day and attacks all night. How we managed to hold it is utterly beyond my understanding. The men were dog-tired. Few of the old officers were left, and they were "done to the world." Never did the Fighting Fifth more deserve the name. It fought dully and instinctively, like a boxer who, after receiving heavy punishment, just manages to keep himself from being knocked out until the call of time.

Yet, when they had dragged themselves wearily and blindly out of the trenches, the fighting men of the Fighting Fifth were given but a day's rest or two before the 15th and two battalions of the 13th were sent to Hooge, and the remainder to hold sectors of the line farther south. Can you wonder that we despatch riders, in comparative safety behind the line,

did all we could to help the most glorious and amazing infantry that the world has ever seen?[1] And when you praise the deeds at Ypres of the First Corps, who had experienced no La Bassée, spare a word for the men of the Fighting Fifth who thought they could fight no more and yet fought.

IV. WITH THE 14TH BRIGADE.

A few days after I had returned from the 15th Brigade I was sent out to the 14th. I found them at the Estaminet de l'Epinette on the Béthune-Richebourg road. Headquarters had been compelled to shift, hastily enough, from the Estaminet de La Bombe on the La Bassée-Estaires road. The estaminet had been shelled to destruction half an hour after the Brigade had moved. The Estaminet de l'Epinette was filthy and small. I slept in a stinking barn, half-full of dirty straw, and rose with the sun for the discomfort of it.

Opposite the estaminet a road goes to Festubert. At the corner there is a cluster of dishevelled houses. I sat at the door and wrote letters, and looked for what might come to pass. In the early dawn the poplars alongside the highway were grey and dull. There was mist on the road; the leaves that lay thick were black. Then as the sun rose higher the poplars began to glisten and the mist rolled away, and the leaves were red and brown. An old woman came up the road and prayed the sentry to let her pass. He could not understand her and called to me. She told me that her family were in the house at the corner fifty yards distant. I replied that she could not go to them — that they, if they were content not to return, might come to her. But the family would not leave their chickens, and cows, and corn. So the old woman, who was tired, sank down by the wayside and wept. This sorrow was no sorrow to the sorrow of the war. I left the old woman, the sentry, and the family, and went in to a fine breakfast.

At this time there was much talk about spies. Our wires were often cut mysteriously. A sergeant had been set upon in a lane. The enemy were finding our guns with uncanny accuracy. All our movements seemed to be anticipated by the enemy. Taking for granted the extraordinary efficiency of the German Intelligence Corps, we were particularly nervous about spies when the Division was worn out, when things were not going well. At the Estaminet de l'Epinette I heard a certain story, and

[1] After nine months at the Front—six and a half months as a despatch rider and two and a half months as a cyclist officer—I have decided that the English language has no superlative sufficient to describe our infantry.

hearing it set about to make a fool of myself. This is the story—I have never heard it substantiated, and give it as an illustration and not as fact.

There was once an artillery brigade billeted in a house two miles or so behind the lines. All the inhabitants of the house had fled, for the village had been heavily bombarded. Only a girl had had the courage to remain and do hostess to the English. She was so fresh and so charming, so clever in her cookery, and so modest in her demeanour that all the men of the brigade headquarters fell madly in love with her. They even quarrelled. Now this brigade was suffering much from espionage. The guns could not be moved without the Germans knowing their new position. No transport or ammunition limbers were safe from the enemy's guns. The brigade grew mightily indignant. The girl was told by her numerous sweethearts what was the matter. She was angry and sympathetic, and swore that through her the spy should be discovered. She swore the truth.

One night a certain lewd fellow of the baser sort pursued the girl with importunate pleadings. She confessed that she liked him, but not in that way. He left her and stood sullenly by the door. The girl took a pail and went down into the cellar to fetch up a little coal, telling the man with gentle mockery not to be so foolish. This angered him, and in a minute he had rushed after her into the cellar, snorting with disappointed passion. Of course he slipped on the stairs and fell with a crash. The girl screamed. The fellow, his knee bruised, tried to feel his way to the bottom of the stairs and touched a wire. Quickly running his hand along the wire he came to a telephone. The girl rushed to him, and, clasping his knees, offered him anything he might wish, if only he would say nothing. I think he must have hesitated for a moment, but he did not hesitate long. The girl was shot.

Full of this suspiciously melodramatic story I caught sight of a mysterious document fastened by nails to the house opposite the inn. It was covered with coloured signs which, whatever they were, certainly did not form letters or make sense in any way. I examined the document closely. One sign looked like an aeroplane, another like a house, a third like the rough drawing of a wood. I took it to a certain officer, who agreed with me that it appeared suspicious. We carried it to the staff-captain, who pointed out very forcibly that it had been raining lately, that colour ran, that the signs left formed portions of letters. I demanded the owner of the house upon which the document had been posted. She was frightened and almost unintelligible, but supplied the missing fragments. The document was a crude election appeal. Being interpreted it read something like this :—

SUPPORT LEFÈVRE. HE IS NOT A LIAR LIKE DUBOIS.

Talking of spies, here is another story. It is true.

Certain wires were always being cut. At length a patrol was organised. While the operator was talking there was a little click and no further acknowledgment from the other end. The patrol started out and caught the man in the act of cutting a second wire. He said nothing.

He was brought before the Mayor. Evidence was briefly given of his guilt. He made no protest. It was stated that he had been born in the village. The Mayor turned to the man and said: You are a traitor. It is clear. Have you anything to say?

The man stood white and straight. Then he bowed his head and made answer: Priez pour moi. That was no defence. So they led him away.

The morning after I arrived at the 14th the Germans concentrated their fire on a large turnip-field and exhumed multitudinous turnips. No further damage was done, but the field was unhealthily near the Estaminet de l'Epinette. In the afternoon we moved our headquarters back a mile or so to a commodious and moderately clean farm with a forgettable name. That evening two prisoners were brought in. They owned to eighteen, but did not look more than sixteen. The guard treated them with kindly contempt. We all sat round a makeshift table in the loft where we slept and told each other stories of fighting and love and fear, while the boys, squatting a little distance away, listened and looked at us in wonder. I came in from a ride about one in the morning and found those of the guard who were off duty and the two German boys sleeping side by side. Literally it was criminal negligence—some one ought to have been awake—but, when I saw one of the boys was clasping tightly a packet of woodbines, I called it something else and went to sleep.

A day or two later I was relieved. On the following afternoon I was sent to Estaires to bring back some details of the Lahore Division which had just arrived on the line. I had, of course, seen Spahis and Turcos and Senegalese, but when riding through Lestrem I saw these Indian troops of ours the obvious thoughts tumbled over one another. We despatch riders when first we met the Indians wondered how they would fight, how they would stand shell-fire and the climate—but chiefly we were filled with a sort of mental helplessness, riding among people when we could not even vaguely guess at what they were thinking. We could get no deeper than their appearance, dignified and clean and well-behaved.

In a few days I was back again at the 14th with T——. At dusk the General went out in his car to a certain village about three miles distant. T—— went with him. An hour or so, and I was sent

after him with a despatch. The road was almost unrideable with the worst sort of grease, the night was pitch-black and I was allowed no light. I slithered along at about six miles an hour, sticking out my legs for a permanent scaffolding. Many troops were lying down at the side of the road. An officer in a strained voice just warned me in time for me to avoid a deep shell-hole by inches. I delivered my despatch to the General. Outside the house I found two or three officers I knew. Two of them were young captains in command of battalions. Then I learnt how hard put to it the Division was, and what the result is of nervous strain. They had been fighting and fighting and fighting until their nerves were nothing but a jangling torture. And a counter-attack on Neuve Chapelle was being organised. T—— told me afterwards that when the car had come along the road, all the men had jumped like startled animals and a few had turned to take cover. Why, if a child had met one of these men she would have taken him by the hand instinctively and told him not to be frightened, and defended him against anything that came. Yet it is said that there are still those at home who will not stir to help. I do not see how this can possibly be true. It could not be true.

First we talked about the counter-attack, and which battalion would lead; then with a little manipulation we began to discuss musical comedy and the beauty of certain ladies. Again the talk would wander back to which battalion would lead. I returned perilously with a despatch and left T——, to spend a disturbed night and experience those curious sensations which are caused by a shell bursting just across the road from the house. The proposed attack was given up. If it had been carried out, those men would have fought as finely as they could. I do not know whether my admiration for the infantry or my hatred of war is the greater. I can express neither.

On the following day the Brigadier moved to a farm farther north. It was the job of T—— and myself to keep up communication between this farm and the brigade headquarters at the farm with the forgettable name. To ride four miles or so along country lanes from one farm to another does not sound particularly strenuous. It was. In the first place, the neighbourhood of the advanced farm was not healthy. The front gate was marked down by a sniper who fired not unfrequently but a little high. Between the back gate and the main road was impassable mud. Again, the farm was only three-quarters of a mile behind our trenches, and "overs" went zipping through the farm buildings at all sorts of unexpected angles. There were German aeroplanes about, so we covered our stationary motor-cycles with straw.

Starting from brigade headquarters the despatch rider in

half a mile was forced to pass the transport of a Field Ambulance. The men seemed to take a perverted delight in wandering aimlessly and deafly across the road, and in leaving anything on the road which could conceivably obstruct or annoy a motor-cyclist. Then came two and a half miles of winding country lanes. They were covered with grease. Every corner was blind. A particularly sharp turn to the right and the despatch rider rode a couple of hundred yards in front of a battery in action that the Germans were trying to find. A "hairpin" corner round a house followed. This he would take with remarkable skill and alacrity, because at this corner he was always sniped. The German's rifle was trained a trifle high. Coming into the final straight the despatch rider or one despatch rider rode for all he was worth. It was unpleasant to find new shell-holes just off the road each time you passed, or, as you came into the straight, to hear the shriek of shrapnel between you and the farm. T—— once arrived at the house of the "hairpin" bend simultaneously with a shell. The shell hit the house, the house did not hit T——, and the sniper forgot to snipe. So every one was pleased.

On my last journey I passed a bunch of wounded Sikhs. They were clinging to all their kit. One man was wounded in both his feet. He was being carried by two of his fellows. In his hands he clutched his boots. They did not know where to go or what to do. I could not make them understand, but I tried by gestures to show them where the ambulance was. I saw two others—they were slightly wounded—talking fiercely together. At last they grasped their rifles firmly, and swinging round, limped back towards the line.

T—— did most of the work that day, because during the greater part of the afternoon I was kept back at brigade headquarters. In the evening I went out in the car to fetch the general. The car, which was old but stout, had been left behind by the Germans. The driver of it was a reservist who had been taken from his battalion. Day and night he tended and coaxed that car. He tied it together when it fell to pieces. At all times and in all places he drove that car, for he had no wish at all to return to the trenches.

On the following day T—— and I were relieved. When we returned to our good old musty quarters at Beuvry, there were rumours of a move.

V. SIMPLE PLEASURES.

We slept in that room which is no room, the entrance-hall of Beuvry Station. It was small and crowded. The floor was covered with straw which we were unable to renew. After

the first fortnight the population of this chamber increased rapidly; one or two of us spoke of himself hereafter in the plural. They gave far less trouble than we had expected, and, though always with some of us until the spring, suffered heavy casualties from the use of copious petrol and the baking of washed shirts in the village oven.

We had been given a cook of our own. He was a youth of dreamy habits and acquisitive tastes, but sometimes made a good stew. Each one of us thought he himself was talented beyond the ordinary, so the cook never wanted assistance—except perhaps in the preparing of breakfast. Food was good and plentiful, while the monotony of army rations was broken by supplies from home and from Béthune. George, thank heaven, was still with us.

Across the bridge was a shop where you could buy anything from a pair of boots to a kilo of vermicelli. Those of us who were not on duty would wander in about eleven in the morning, drink multitudinous bowls of coffee at two sous the bowl, and pass the time of day with some of the cyclists who were billeted in the big brewery. Just down the road was a tavern where infernal cognac could be got and occasionally good red wine.

Even when there was little to do, the station was not dull. French hussars, dainty men with thin and graceful horses, rode over the bridge and along the canal every morning. Cuirassiers would clatter and swagger by—and guns, both French and English. Behind the station much ammunition was stored, a source of keen pleasure if ever the Germans had attempted to shell the station. It was well within range. During the last week his Majesty's armoured train, "Jellicoe," painted in wondrous colours, would rumble in and on towards La Bassée. The crew were full of Antwerp tales and late newspapers. The first time the train went into action it demolished a German battery, but afterwards it had little luck.

The corps was at Hinges. If work were slack and the Signal Sergeant were kind, he would give one of us a bunch of messages for the corps, with the hint that the return might be made at leisure. Between Hinges and Beuvry lay Béthune. Hinges deserves a word.

When first the corps came to Hinges, the inhabitants were exalted. The small boys came out in putties and the women put ribbons in their hair. Now, if you pronounce Hinges in the French fashion, you give forth an exclamation of distressful pain. The name cannot be shouted from a motor-cycle. It has its difficulties even for the student of French. So we all called it, plainly and bluntly, Hinges, as though it were connected to a door. The inhabitants noticed this. Thinking that they and their forefathers had been wrong—for surely these fine men with red hats knew better than they—the English pronunciation spread. The village became 'Ingees,

and now only some unfashionable dotards in Béthune preserve the tradition of the old pronunciation. It is not only Hinges that has been thus decently attired in British garb. Le Cateau is Lee Catòo. Boescheppe is Bo-peep. Ouderdon is Eiderdown.

Béthune was full of simple pleasures. First there were the public baths, cheap and good, and sundry coiffeurs who were much in demand, for they made you smell sweetly. Then there was a little blue and white café. The daughter of the house was well-favoured and played the piano with some skill. One of us spent all his spare time at this café in silent adoration — of the piano, for his French was exiguous in the extreme. There was a patisserie crammed full of the most delicious cream-cakes. The despatch rider who went to Hinges about 3.30 P.M. and did not return with cakes for tea, found life unpleasant. Near the station three damsels ruled a tavern. They were friendly and eager to teach us French. We might have left them with a sigh of regret if we had not once arrived as they were eating their midday meal.

At one time the Germans dropped a few shells into Béthune, but did little damage. Bombs fell too. One nearly ended the existence of "Sadders"—also known as "Boo." It dropped on the other side of the street; doing our despatch rider no damage, it slightly wounded Sergeant C—— of the Cyclists in a portion of his body that made him swear when he was classed as a "sitting-up case."

Of all the towns behind the lines — Béthune, Estaires, Armentières, Bailleul, Poperinghe —Béthune is the pleasantest. The people are charming. There is nothing you cannot buy there. It is clean and well-ordered, and cheerful in the rain. I pray that Béthune may survive the war — that after peace has been declared and Berlin has been entered, I may spend a week there and much money to the profit of the people and the satisfaction of myself.

During the last week in October there were rumours of hard fighting in Ypres. The Lahore division came down towards our line and began to take over from us. The 14th Brigade was left to strengthen them. The 15th and 13th began to move north. Early on the morning of October 29 we started, riding first along the canal by Béthune. As for Festubert, Givenchy, Violaines, Rue de Marais, Quinque Rue, and La Bassée, we never want to see them again.

A NOTE ON CONDÉ BRIDGE.

Letters are never strictly accurate, and mine are no exception. I hope that my readers, if they desire to know

the truth, will read this note. Besides, it contains a fine story.

In my first instalment, "The Great Marches," published in the May number of this magazine, or more accurately in Chapter V. The Retreat (vol. cxcvii. pp. 593-602), I told how a certain regiment ambushed a car and shot the officers in it. These are the fuller details which I have received from the gallant and resourceful officer who commanded in that affair. The regiment concerned was the 2nd Duke of Wellington's.

The capture was made by a clever ambush. There were three cars (not one), and they contained the General Commanding—he belonged to the Death's Head Hussars — and the Headquarters Staff of the 1st Cavalry Division. Owing to the very heavy rifle-fire at the time, it was quite impossible to bring in these cars or take any prisoners. There was no idea of unwillingness to take prisoners.

I myself heard the story from a sergeant of the "Dooks" about half an hour after the affair. He was loud in his praises of the officer, but concluded in a blood-curdling tone, "The Dooks don't take prisoners." Regretfully I see now that the said sergeant was endeavouring to impose on a young soldier with a few weeks' service. He succeeded.

Again, in the fourth chapter of my second instalment—"Alarums and Excursions," vol. cxcvii. pp. 851-854 — I told the story of what I called "the Condé Scare." I told it as I heard it, and as it went round the Division at the time, but that, unfortunately, does not make the story more accurate. Here is the story as I have had it from the officer principally concerned—

Condé Bridge was under our control only by shell-fire, so that we were obliged to patrol it by night. For this purpose an officers' patrol was organised and supplied every night by different regiments. So many conflicting reports were received nightly about the bridge that the officer who told me the story was appointed Brigade Patrolling Officer.

He established himself in a certain wood, and on the night in question worked right up beyond Condé Bridge, until he found a burning house, about 200 yards beyond the bridge on the south side. In the flare of the house he was surprised to discover Germans entrenched in an old drain on our side of the river. He had unknowingly passed this body of the enemy. He heard, too, a continuous stream of Germans with transport marching through the woods towards the bridge. Working his way back, he reported the matter personally to the Brigadier of the 13th Brigade, who sent this message to the Division:—

Germans entrenched south side of Condé Bridge, and are believed to be crossing in large numbers.

What really happened was that the Germans came down to fill their water-carts that night, and to guard against a surprise attack pushed forward two platoons of infantry across the bridge into the drain. Unfortunately one of our patrols disobeyed its orders that night, and patrolled a forbidden portion of the road. The officer shot two of these men in the dark.

Three days later the outpost company on the Vesle bridge of the Aisne was surrounded, and later still Condé Bridge passed out of our artillery control, and was finally crossed by the Germans.

The officer can quite understand my mistake, as the Division received over fifty reports that night stating that the bridge was clear. These reports were afterwards proved to be inaccurate.

I apologise to all concerned for my misstatements, but I am sure that my readers will be more grateful to me for re-telling to them this characteristic story of resourceful reconnaissance than angry with me for having innocently deceived them.

(*To be continued.*)

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

THE GERMANS OF 1870—THE PILLAGING OF FRANCE—"REGULAR ROBBERS"—THE MEDITATED ASSAULT OF 1875—THE CYNICISM OF NATIONS—WHAT IS THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE?—THE JUSTICE OF COMPULSION—THE SPEECHES OF PITT—ACTION IN WORDS.

LORD BRYCE and his colleagues declared in their report, as an *obiter dictum*, that the atrocities committed in the present war are without parallel in the history of civilised nations. Turkey, they think, has hitherto stood alone upon the guilty eminence of savagery which to-day she shares with Germany. This is to take far too kindly a view of our adversaries. The Germans show themselves still, what they have always been, a nation of over-disciplined ruffians. The have remained true to the immemorial traditions of their race. They have not become suddenly possessed by an evil spirit, as their many friends in Great Britain would persuade us to believe. They are changed not a jot from the Germans of 1870. In that black year the soldiers of Moltke's army pursued precisely the same tactics which have now sent a thrill of horror through the world, and they pursued them to the same purpose and with the same excuse. But memories are short; after a brief lapse of time we are inclined to believe the soft falsehoods we are told; and it is therefore worth while to recall some of the atrocities which disgraced Germany's earlier and more facile campaign against France.

Nor is there the slightest difficulty in discovering evidence of German brutality. On the 29th of November 1870 M. Chaudordy, delegate of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, indited a circular of protest, and despatched it to the agents of France abroad. The terms of the circular are so plainly familiar, they have found an echo in so many recent blue-books, that the reader can hardly believe it to set forth the crimes of forty years ago. M. Chaudordy asserted that the Germans, in contempt of civilisation and covering themselves by the necessities of war—the very self-same plea of M. Bethmann-Hollweg—had burned and ravaged the land. Not only had they made exorbitant requisitions in kind and money, not only had they imposed, as a sort of military task-work, contributions upon the people far beyond its resources, but, not content thus to crush towns and villages, they laid a criminal hand upon private property. In other words, the Germans, then as now, made war like highwaymen. The families of France were bidden to give up their plate and their jewels. Whatever was of value was seized by the enemy and crammed into sacks and carts. Clothes, watches, clocks, objects of

every kind, were found upon prisoners who fell into the hands of the French. Whatever money the Germans found they put into their own pockets. One country gentleman, arrested at his seat, was condemned to pay 80,000 francs as personal ransom. Another saw carried off the shawls, the furs, the lace, the silk dresses of his wife. All the cellars were emptied, and the wine that the German freebooters could not drink was loaded upon waggons and sent away. Moreover, whole towns were systematically punished for the act of a single citizen, guilty only of having defended his life against the invader. For this offence higher officers ordered towns and villages to be burned and pillaged, making an evil use for this savage execution of the implacable discipline imposed upon their troops.

And human life was no more respected than was private property. Although the whole nation of France had risen in arms, the Germans shot without pity not only the peasants who armed themselves against the invaders, but soldiers furnished with commissions and wearing legal uniforms. Thus intimidation became a method of warfare, and the Germans in 1870, as in 1914, did their best to terrorise the whole people, to paralyse the very spirit of patriotism. With this same intent the Prussians, in defiance of the laws of war, bombarded open towns without warning, and killed old men, women, and children. Already adepts at infanticide, they anticipated the brave exploits of Scarborough and Whitby, and practised a refined form of violence not removed by an inch from torture. So to complete its code of barbarism Prussia revived the system of hostages, and applied wherever it went the odious principle of indirect responsibility. If its transports were endangered or its camps disturbed, it punished by imprisonment, exile, or even death one of the notables of the country. Thus honour and respect became a danger to those who deserved them. Innocent men were asked to answer, with their fortunes or their lives, for actions which they could not repress, and which were merely the legitimate exercise of a defender's right. Still worse, the Germans forced the wretched peasants, under menace of death, to build them fortifications and so to work against the defenders of their own country. And as though all this were not enough, they profaned and defiled the sanctuaries and churches, they beat the priests, and they outraged women, thus holding themselves above and beyond all the laws of God and man. Nor could they plead in excuse that the acts of brutality, whereof the French complained, should be ascribed to this or that individual ruffian. In 1870, as in 1914-15, the German atrocities were the result of a deliberate system, ingeniously applied with a scientific rigour. Nothing was unforeseen or left to chance. The

houses of peaceable citizens were set on fire with chemicals brought for the purpose, and it was this clear proof of a vile intention which made the Franco-Prussian War the shame of its century.

Thus M. Chaudordy,—and as you read his calm, indignant recital, you see that the German is to-day what he was yesterday, what doubtless he will be to-morrow. Secure in his arrogance, he believes that actions which are disgraceful in others are laudable in him. A law unto himself, he commits the most brutal crimes in cold blood, and then brags of his lofty Teutonic soul! And as M. Chaudordy's dignified indictment differs not from that of Lord Bryce's Committee, so the evidence by which it may be supported is precisely the same as that recently adduced. If the curious will consult a 'Recueil de Documents sur les Exactions, vols et cruautés des Armées Prussiennes en France,' published in 1871, they will find therein an amazing proof of the uniformity of the German temper. Here, for instance, is an account of what happened at Andernay, given by one Bernard Gillot: "I was at Andernay on the 8th of September with my family, consisting of my wife and six children, among them a daughter of eighteen years of age, when a body of Prussian soldiers arrived in the place. They gave themselves up to every imaginable excess; they violated the young girls, and having done their deeds of bestiality, they killed our children under our eyes with their bayonets. I had the misery of being forced to witness these massacres inflicted upon the person of my daughter." You may find the counterpart of this atrocity upon any page of Lord Bryce's blue-book. The Germans were already guilty of the Sadism which disgraced them last year, when they invaded the country whose neutrality they had guaranteed; and what was done at Andernay was done also at Forêt-la-Folie, at Nemours, at Châteaudun, at every town and village through which they passed. Letters found upon German prisoners supported the evidence of the victims. One simple cuirassier confesses that when the Germans got back, they would not know the difference between mine and thine. "We have become regular robbers," he says; "we are ordered to take whatever we find and can use. The most of the châteaux in this province are deserted, and having entered them we lay hands upon everything that is worth taking. Above all, we search the cellars and we have drunk more champagne in Normandy than in the whole of Champagne. Besides, we drive off all the horses that we can, and carry away all the articles of toilet, mirrors, brushes, shoes, stockings, linen, and especially night-caps. The officers, of course, insist upon the precedence, which is their due, and steal magnificent harness, and particularly the pictures of great value which hang

upon the walls of the châteaux." That has a familiar sound, to which the history of the last few months has accustomed us, and it leaves us in no doubt that the Germans of to-day are adhering faithfully to the criminal habits of their fathers.

The English press supported the protest of M. Chaudordy with unanimity. The correspondent of 'The Daily Telegraph' asserted that the truth was vastly understated in the famous circular; that he had witnessed far more disgraceful atrocities than those denounced by the French Foreign Office in Alsace, in Lorraine, in the Oise,—everywhere, in brief, along the road taken by the Prussians. 'The Times' confessed that it was impossible to give an idea of the state of the villages and hamlets in the neighbourhood of Paris. "They are now divided in categories," said its correspondent, "and the Germans know them familiarly by such expressions as these: (1) The town of A, *pretty well pillaged;* (2) The town of B, *moderately pillaged;* (3) The town of C, *completely cleaned out.* But it needs a sure eye and a wide experience to distinguish between these degrees of misery." Thus the indictment of the Germans in 1870 rested not upon partial or interested evidence; it rested upon the deliberate testimony of neutral witnesses, who at the beginning of the war were manifestly inclined to take the side of Prussia; and it excited among us at any rate such a violent reaction in favour of France as stirred the Germans to a fury of hatred against England until now unparalleled.

Bismarck and his friends treated the charges of M. Chaudordy with their accustomed nonchalance. The patient Busch was ordered to write the usual article of prevarication. He declared that had M. Chaudordy not been ignorant of war he would have been astonished at Prussia's "comparative reasonableness," that the European cabinets knew the humane spirit in which the Germans carry on war, and that the German people would have little difficulty in rating the assertions of its French accuser at their real worth, &c. But no attempt was made then, as no attempt is made to-day, to disprove the definite charges, signed, sealed, and sworn to; no word was said in apology for the Germans' dastardly and ascertained brutalities. So high an ascendancy had Bismarck's theory of blood and iron gained over the minds of men, that we find diplomatists like Morier, while they admitted with regret that the war was waged pitilessly and mercilessly, that the maximum of damage was inflicted which could be done to the invaded country in the way of requisitions in kind and money, according to the harshest readings of the laws of war, still pleading that it was the Bavarians alone who were guilty of pillage and devastation, and that the Prussians

were always held in the bonds of a strict discipline. The facts, we know now, were against this comfortable theory; and had Morier lived until to-day he would have confessed, as indeed he then very speedily discovered, that the supposed humanity of Prussia was a mere piece of cynical Pecksniffism.

Indeed, ardent lover of Germany as Morier was, he already had his misgivings. He did not love the Junkers, nor the Militär Cabinet, nor "the three-haired Lieutenant-General," as Bismarck was depicted in the caricatures. He owned that for years Prussia had attempted to gain by foul means what she might have gained by fair, that his Teutonic idealism had been bitterly disappointed. And he foresaw long before the war was over that the successes of the German arms would speedily change for the worse the German national character. It was bad enough already, by his own confession. He saw clearly the deeps into which it would be plunged. "Arrogance and overbearingness," he wrote in 1871, "are the qualities likely to be developed in a Teutonic race. . . . I was painfully struck in my visit to the camp at Metz in October by the extraordinary difference I witnessed in this respect between the language and *tenue* of the officers I met with there and those I observed in the days which preceded the invasion of France. Is it love of exaggeration," he asked Stockmar, "to fear that under such circumstances the German Empire, based on universal suffrage, *e.g.*, on the suffrage of the 800,000 men who have been fighting in France, and beginning life under the direction of a lieutenant-general, who has been present during the whole campaign, may have some of the faults of militarism attached to it?" That was no exaggeration, but a very moderate prophecy made in 1871, and amply fulfilled within a few months.

Why was it, then, that the German brutality, denied by Bismarck, partly acknowledged and excused by Morier, should have passed so swiftly from the minds of men? It is because the imposition of a falsehood upon the world was one of the fruits of victory. Bismarck, triumphant over Europe and secure in the fidelity of his reptile press, compelled the world to believe what he chose that it should believe. With the help of agents, slavish in obedience, he created a legend of Prussia, which, though it was never accepted in France, was ardently cherished until last August in all the Radical circles of Great Britain. It was a great achievement, and had Bismarck's successors boasted a tithe of his resolution and resource, it might have availed to keep Europe in subjection for another half century. Thus he taught the world to believe that the Germans were models of industry and kindness, that they were perfectly contented if only they were given beer and philosophy to their taste, that they were neither puffed up nor had any proud looks, and

that they cherished one hope only and one wish—to live in terms of friendship and charity with their neighbours. That is what victory can accomplish; and if the Germans were to win to-day, the memory of all the brutal crimes, which we know they have committed, would fade utterly from the minds of men, and the triumphing Teuton would once more delude his victims, by the exercise of force and the careful manipulation of the press, into believing him to be nothing worse than a boon companion and a harmless pedant.

Happily for us the war will end only with the success of the Allies, and the bitterness of defeat shall reveal the German in his own black colours of cynicism and cruelty. For it is cynicism, in the most brutal sense, that has been his undoing. The career of Bismarck, triumphant though it was, was the career of one who cared not a jot for truth or for honour. He crushed France, as he crushed Denmark and Austria, for the mere purpose of aggrandisement. The fable that in 1870 he was repelling an attack, was long since valued at its proper worth. And the crime which he contemplated in 1875 is blacker than any of those which he committed in the years of his omnipotence. Let those who pretend to believe that Germany suddenly became base and brutal, remember the unprovoked assault upon France which she meditated under Bismarck's auspices four years after the treaty of peace had been signed. The fault of France in the German Chancellor's eyes was that she had made too rapid a recovery. The regret that he had asked so small an indemnity was unassuaged, and now, in 1875, it seemed as though France was daring to rearm herself. Was not this the proper opportunity to strike her to the earth again, helpless and bleeding? For those who had no other theory of politics than "might is right," the day, the hour, seemed to have arrived. The inspired journals were sure that it was Germany's duty to attack France before she had completed the reorganisation of her field artillery. Bismarck and Moltke were at one in the business, for slightly different reasons. The Chancellor was resolved upon the partition of Belgium, which he regarded as the seat of ultramontane intrigue. The Field-Marshal, caring nothing whatever for politics, and having made up his mind that France was not sufficiently crushed, saw an immediate necessity—the goddess always invoked by Prussians—for a fresh war. One thing only was needful—to placate Russia and England, that the way might be plain for the ambitious schemes of Bismarck and Moltke. For a while the Crown Prince swayed, like a leaf in the wind, between war and peace. Blown hither in a gust by the Chancellor, blown thither by the steadier impulse of Morier, he was sent whirling through space without a chance of de-

scending upon the earth. A letter written to him by Morier on May 6, 1875, contains so much wise counsel and so clever a diagnosis of the Teutonic madness that it will remain for ever memorable. After denouncing German Chauvinism, infinitely more dangerous than the French variety, because it is methodical, calculating, cold-blooded, and self-contained, Morier wrote a passage of true wisdom, which in the present crisis cannot be read and quoted too often: "An individual," said he, "may, under the dæmonic impulse of superhuman cynicism, laugh to scorn the opinion and conscience of contemporary mankind, and still more of posterity. I can conceive an Attila chuckling even on the brink of the grave at the thought of living in the memory of future generations as a *Gottes Geissel* (scourge of God); but a nation cannot afford to enjoy the luxury of cynicism, cannot risk to place itself outside the pale of the opinions of mankind, because a nation never dies, and the conscience of mankind never dies, and when the orgies of successful force have spent their strength, the day comes when it has to live not with its own recollections, but with those which mankind have preserved of it. It was the living, not the dead Cain that was branded as the murderer of his brother."

This wise and eloquent passage carries ten times greater weight to-day than in 1875. The fatal hour has come, and it will be Germany's destiny to live for the rest of time with the black recollection which mankind will preserve of her. The killer of women and children, the scuttler of peaceful ships, the ravager of innocent towns and villages will never die, and her sins will never be forgotten. Her pedantic ferocity, her academic cynicism, are now plain for all the world to see, and they are immortal. In 1870 conquest procured oblivion of her excesses. In 1875 Russia and England, by asserting, through Schouvaloff and Lord Derby, that they would not permit a war of aggression against France, foiled the schemes of Bismarck and Moltke, and thus preserved Germany from another reproach of a scientific cruelty. Nothing can save Germany now from the consequences of her misdeeds. Belgium, Reims, Scarborough, *Lusitania*—these words shall be incised for ever upon her forehead, and longing for death more bitterly than ever Tithonus longed for it, she will discover that no release is possible. Condemned to wander until the end of time a homeless, hopeless pariah, she will at last recognise the truth of Morier's saying: "It was the living, not the dead Cain that was branded as the murderer of his brother."

Such as Germany was in 1875 she has remained until this day. She has increased only in the intensity of her ambition and organisation. She has added to her other creeds of warlike supremacy the creed of pan-Germanism.

In the last twenty years she has attempted to lay her greedy hands upon every corner of the globe. Her method of "peaceful penetration" has endangered the freedom and comfort of half a dozen nations. And what have we done to oppose her encroachments? How have we armed ourselves for the conflict, which we should all have foreseen, and which would have been hidden from none of us had not the politicians thrown a veil between the country and the truth? We have vaunted our "voluntary system," and boasted ourselves ready for any emergency. Our doctrinaires, our sentimentalists, and our idlers have agreed in singing the praises of the volunteer. The only thing that matters, we have been told, is that every man should be free if he choose to withhold the strength of his arm from the service of the nation. Upon that, this privilege of refusal, is said to depend all our hope of future liberty. And after their common fashion the doctrinaires and sentimentalists, having enunciated a policy that suits their folly, discover within it a thousand virtues. One volunteer, they declare, is worth ten conscripts! There never was a more preposterous statement. No soldier is worth his pay if he be not highly trained and highly skilled. The mere wish to fight does not make a hero. There is no gayer, more willing soldier than the conscript of France, and only the fool, intent upon underrating his antagonist, would deny the spirit or the courage of the well-trained German, who goes gladly into the firing line for what seems to our sentimentalists the basest of reasons — because he is ordered there.

Yet when we examine the system whose praises have been so loudly sung, we discover at once that it is not voluntary at all. "Casual" would be the better name for it. In times of peace we fill our army, as we fill our workhouses, with the homeless and helpless. That the tramps and loafers, who in default of lucrative work take the King's shilling, presently turn out to be excellent soldiers, is a tribute to their blood and training, not to the system falsely called voluntary. And since we have been at war there is no kind of compulsion—save the one honourable compulsion of universal service—that our governors have not employed. Our hoardings have been covered with advertisements, which alternately menace and ridicule the shirker. Shamefully flippant appeals to the laggard's "best girl," attempts to overcome a dormant conscience by the stern question, "What did you do in the great war?" — these are not the methods of freedom. The truth is that in war, as in peace, our Ministers have not dared to ask of the citizen any duty in exchange for the lofty privilege of marking a ballot-paper, and having declared aloud that one volun-

teer is worth ten conscripts, they have given us a practical proof that they cannot distinguish between freedom and blackmail.

That England, in the very crisis of her fate, should shape her action to accord with vast and baseless assumptions, appears to our allies and our enemies alike a piece of wicked levity. We are fighting, so it is said, not only Germany, but the devil of conscription. If Germany win, we can bear the shame and the slavery that will follow, murmur the Radicals, if only we cling tight to the sacred principle of voluntary service! That there are people in the country base enough and foolish enough to say such things would seem incredible, did we not remember the wickedness that is done and said every day in the name of politics. And what after all is the principle for which the peacemongers are ready to surrender our Empire and their own homes? It means no more than that a man is a fool to fight who can get another to fight for him. There is, indeed, nothing lofty in this brutal affirmation of selfishness, and of one thing we may be sure: it is not the men in the trenches who prate of the voluntary system. Their one complaint is that the shirkers are not by their side to share the danger and the toil. It is the men who stay at home in comfort who see in the right to leave the work to others the very essence of what they miscall freedom.

The voluntary system, then, we may take it, is no better than an unjust compulsion. That it gives us a better, braver army than the army of our foes is an idle superstition. And even if there were a rare and mystical valour in the volunteer, it would still be difficult to defend what is falsely called the voluntary principle. For despite the welter of advertisements, despite the vulgar defacement of hoardings, thousands enlisted at the outset not in shame, not in fear of what somebody else would say, but because they heard the call of patriotism. That these brave men should go is right; it is not right that they should be the only ones to go. In other words, the state which depends upon the free-will of its soldiers is a spendthrift state. It is like a banker who would fling away all his gold coins, and then attempt to build up his business again upon a copper currency. Whether the volunteers, who were the first to find their way into Kitchener's Army, were better soldiers than the conscript or not, it is evident that they were better men. They did not hang back from the sacrifice; they came forward eagerly with their gift of strength and life; and they won the undying gratitude and respect of their countrymen. As you saw them in the early days of the war marching through the street, you could not help discerning in their faces a proud and dedicated look. Not even their solemn gaiety hid the consciousness of

a lofty vocation; yet how could we see them go, unaided by the laggard, without a regret that we were sending all our best abroad and keeping all our worst at home?

We must remember that the war will not last for ever, and that after the war we shall have to reconstruct a broken country. And what will be the prospect if only the shirkers are left to do the work and to be the fathers of the new generation? The strongest argument for "racing as usual" was that the abolition of racing would interfere with the breed of horses. What about the breed of men? Shall we, then, sacrifice the best strength and courage of our people because the shirkers refuse to take their chance? That the shirkers, properly trained, make good soldiers, has been proved over and over again in the past. Without the press-gang we could not have won the battle of Trafalgar. We defeated Napoleon by the help of the Militia Ballot. The measures of compulsion taken by Pitt saved England, although they erred on the side of mildness, and it is surely time that we put away from us the superstition of a sham liberty, still preached in the conventicles of Radicalism.

The only true voluntary system is the system of France, where we find universal conscription supported eagerly by universal suffrage. The whole manhood of France fights by its own will. It does not permit the idler or the *apache* to stay at home. The wasteful system adopted in these islands is not voluntary, as we have seen; it is but a veiled form of compulsion. It is not just, because it spreads a net through whose meshes the ill-disposed escape. Our salvation lies in an equal law—the law of compulsion—for all, brave and timid, fighter and lag-behind. Thus only shall we train armies adequate in number for the task they have to perform; thus only shall we conserve, in the future, the spirit and tradition of our race. The nation, in fact, asks only to be told what it shall do. If the Government issues an imperious command there will be no unwillingness to obey. We are all ripe for obedience. But the command must be given in a clear voice and without any thought of politics or popularity. The case is too grave for such follies as these. Nor, as has been said before in these pages, can the war be fought only upon the Continent. At home, as abroad, the same voice of command must be heard. Those who make munitions of war should be subject to the same discipline which holds the soldier to his duty. We should have no more of that shameful partiality, which shoots the deserter in the trenches, and permits the working man, upon whose exertion the army depends, to take what holidays he pleases, and to strike, while our soldiers die, for higher pay.

All that is wanted, then, is that the order should be given. The responsibility of success

and failure depends upon the Government, organised for no other purpose than the vigorous prosecution of the war. In this single point the whole energy of the country must be centred. There should be no divergence of interest, no weak compliance of our Ministers with the worn superstitions of peace. There is work for us all to do, and we must be compelled to do it:

"As many arrows, loosed several ways,
Come to one mark;
As many several ways meet in one town;
As many fresh streams run in one self sea;
As many lines close in the dial's center;
So many a thousand actions, once afoot,
End in one purpose, and be all well borne,
Without defeat. Therefore to France."

Unhappily our Government speaks with many voices. A Cabinet of twenty-two is not immune from the spirit of the crowd. Subject to uncertainty, the curse of all democracies, it dissipates its authority in the usual processes of a committee. When William Pitt sustained upon his shoulders the weight of the French war, he was better able to bear the burden than his successors. Democracy is more than a century older to-day than it was in his time, and it has travelled many miles further upon the road of irresponsibility. As you read Pitt's war speeches, recently edited by Mr R. Coupland (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press), you cannot but be conscious of the immense advantage which was his. He spoke, as a man of action, with the true accent of autocracy. He had not to consider his colleagues, who were few in number; he refused to submit to the governance of the constituencies; he did what he thought was right for England with fearless resolution. And as his advantage was immense, so his task was infinitely less in intensity than that which faces our Ministers to-day. His difficulties were spread, so to say, over a larger surface. The armies which he called into being, adequate perhaps then, were mere handfuls of men compared with the vast numbers which are enrolled to-day. His duty was yet unfinished when he laid down his life for his country. And so it is that his speeches—especially his war speeches—are sternly practical. He cared little for the ornaments of rhetoric; he cared vastly for the salvation of the country. Coleridge once wrote a sketch of Pitt, which sketch Hazlitt stole, as you might steal half-a-crown from a friend, and came to the conclusion that Pitt had not left behind him "a single memorable saying, not one profound maxim, one solid observation, one forcible description, one beautiful thought, one affecting sentiment." Worse still, he had "made no addition whatever to the stock of human knowledge." It was the metaphysician blaming the man of action, according to his custom. Even if all that Coleridge said were true, and it is obviously false, the charge would still fall

lightly upon Pitt's back. If he had failed in the way in which Coleridge said he had failed, that did not lessen the value of his work and sacrifice. It was not for him to indulge in beautiful thoughts or affecting sentiments; it was his business to save the Empire. His speeches were designed to support the spirit of the country, and admirably they achieved their purpose. When Tierney challenged him, in February 1800, to define the real object of the war, he crushed his opponent and gave his fellow-citizens the encouragement which they needed. "He defies me to state in one sentence," said Pitt, "the object of the war. I know not whether I can do it in one sentence; but in one word I can tell him that it is *security:* security against a danger, the greatest that ever threatened the world. It is security against a danger which never existed in any past period of society. It is security against a danger which in degree and extent was never equalled; against a danger which threatened all the nations of the earth; a danger which has been resisted by all the nations of Europe, and resisted by none with so much success as by this nation, because by none has it been resisted so uniformly and with so much energy." Here are no fine words, no rhetorical tricks, but merely a clear refutation of a frivolous argument, a plain statement of a high aim and purpose. Even Mr Tierney would not flout the security of the Empire, and he knew, as the Minister himself knew, that Pitt spoke with the nation at his back. Even Pitt's last speech, travestied though it has been by foolish demagogues, still vibrates with the eloquence of action. The Lord Mayor, in proposing his health, had hailed him as the Saviour of Europe. Pitt's reply was brevity itself: "I return you many thanks for the honour you have done me; but Europe is not to be saved by any single man. England has saved herself by her exertions, and will, as I trust, save Europe by her example." The same task confronts England to-day as confronted her when Pitt's voice was heard for the last time. And she will save herself and Europe, only if she puts away the childish superstition of voluntary service, and throws every ounce of her strength and skill into the scale of war.

Printed by William Blackwood and Sons.

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCXCVIII. AUGUST 1915. Vol. CXCVIII.

THE FIRST HUNDRED THOUSAND.

BY THE JUNIOR SUB.

XVI. "DIRTY WORK AT THE CROSS-ROADS TO-NIGHT."

Last week we abandoned the rural billets in which we had been remodelling some of our methods (on the experiences gained by our first visit to the trenches), and paraded at full strength for a march which we knew would bring us right into the heart of things. No more trial trips; no more chaperoning! This time, we decided, we were "for it."

During our three weeks of active service we have learned two things—the art of shaking down quickly into our habitation of the moment, as already noted; and the art of reducing our personal effects to a portable minimum.

To the private soldier the latter problem presents no difficulties. Everything is arranged for him. His outfit is provided by the Government, and he carries it himself. It consists of a rifle, bayonet, and a hundred and twenty rounds of ammunition. On one side of him hangs his water-bottle, containing a quart of water, on the other, a haversack, occupied by his "iron ration"—an emergency meal of the tinned variety, which must never on any account be opened except by order of the C.O.—and such private effects as his smoking outfit and an entirely mythical item of refreshment officially known as "the unexpended portion of the day's ration." On his back he carries a "pack," containing his greatcoat, waterproof sheet, and such changes of raiment as a paternal Government allows him. He also has to find room therein for a towel, housewife, and a modest allowance of cutlery. (He frequently

wears the spoon in his stocking, as a skean-dhu.) Round his neck he wears his identity disc. In his breast-pocket he carries a respirator, to be donned in the event of his encountering the twin misfortunes of an east wind and a gaseous Hun. He also carries a bottle of liquid for damping the respirator. In the flap of his jacket is sewn a field dressing.

Slung behind him is an entrenching tool.

Any other space upon his person is at his own disposal, and he may carry what he likes, except "unsoldierly trinkets"—whatever those may be. However, if the passion for self-adornment proves too strong, he may wear "the French National Colours"—a compliment to our gallant ally which is slightly discounted by the fact that her national colours are the same as our own.

However, once he has attached this outfit to his suffering person, and has said what he thinks about its weight, the private has no more baggage worries. Except for his blanket, which is carried on a waggon, he is his own arsenal, wardrobe, and pantry.

Not so the officer. He suffers from *embarras de choise.* He is the victim of his female relatives, who are themselves the victims of those enterprising tradesmen who have adopted the most obvious method of getting rid of otherwise unsaleable goods by labelling everything *For Active Service*—a really happy thought when you are trying to sell a pipe of port or a manicure set. Have you seen Our Active Service Trouser-Press?

By the end of April Bobby Little had accumulated, with a view to facilitating the destruction of the foe—

An automatic Mauser pistol, with two thousand rounds of ammunition.

A regulation Service revolver.

A camp bed.

A camp table.

A camp chair.

A pneumatic mattress.

[This ingenious contrivance was meant to be blown up, like an air-cushion, and Bobby's servant expended most of the day and much valuable breath in performing the feat. Ultimately, in a misguided attempt to save his lungs from rupture, he employed a bicycle pump, and burst the bed.]

A sleeping (or "flea") bag.

A portable bath.

A portable wash-hand stand.

A dressing-case, heavily ballasted with cut-glass bottles.

A primus stove.

A despatch case.

The "Service" Kipling. (About forty volumes.)

Innumerable socks and shirts.

A box of soap.

Fifty boxes of matches.

A small medicine chest.

About a dozen first-aid outfits.

A case of pipes, and cigarettes innumerable.

[Bobby's aunts regarded cigars as not quite ascetic enough for active service. Besides, they might make him sick.]

About a cubic foot of chocolate (various).

Numerous compressed foods and concentrated drinks.

An "active service" cooking outfit.

An electric lamp, with several refills.

A pair of binoculars.

A telescope.

A prismatic compass.

A sparklet siphon.

A luminous watch.

A pair of insulated wire-cutters.

"There's only one thing you've forgotten," remarked Captain Wagstaffe, when introduced to this unique collection of curios.

"What is that?" inquired Bobby, always eager to learn.

"A pantechnicon! Do you know how much personal baggage an officer is allowed, in addition to what he carries himself?"

"Thirty-five pounds."

"Correct."

"It sounds a lot," said Bobby.

"It looks precious little!" was Wagstaffe's reply.

"I suppose they won't be particular to a pound or so," said Bobby optimistically.

"Listen," commanded Wagstaffe. "When we go abroad, your Wolseley valise, containing this"—he swept his hand round the crowded hut—"this military museum, will be handed to the Quartermaster. He is a man of singularly rigid mind, with an exasperating habit of interpreting rules and regulations quite literally. If you persist in this scheme of asking him to pass half a ton of assorted lumber as a package weighing thirty-five pounds, he will cast you forth and remain your enemy for life. And personally," concluded Wagstaffe, "I would rather keep on the right side of my Regimental Quartermaster than of the Commander-in-Chief himself. Now, send all this stuff home—you can use it on manœuvres in peace-time—and I will give you a little list which will not break the baggage-waggon's back."

The methodical Bobby produced a note-book.

"You will require to wash occasionally. Take a canvas bucket, some carbolic soap, and a good big towel. Also your tooth-brush, and—excuse the question, but do you shave?"

"Twice a week," admitted the blushing Bobby.

"Happy man! Well, take a safety-razor. That will do for cleanliness. Now for clothing. Lots of socks, but only one change of other things, unless you care to take a third shirt in your greatcoat pocket. Two good pairs of boots, and a pair of slacks. Then, as regards sleeping. Your flea-bag and your three Government blankets, with your valise underneath, will keep you (and your little bedfellows) as warm as toast. You may get separated from your valise, though, so take a groundsheet in your pack. Then you will be ready to dine and sleep simply anywhere, at a

moment's notice. As regards comforts generally, take a "Tommy's cooker," if you can find room for it, and scrap all the rest of your cuisine except your canteen. Take a few meat lozenges and some chocolate in one of your ammunition-pouches, in case you ever have to go without your breakfast. Rotten work, marching or fighting on a hollow tummy!"

"What about revolvers?" inquired Bobby, displaying his arsenal, a little nervously.

"If the Germans catch you with that Mauser, they will hang you. Take the Webley. Then you can always draw Service ammunition." Wagstaffe ran his eye over the rest of Bobby's outfit. "Smokes? Take your pipe and a tinder-box: you will get baccy and cigarettes to burn out there. Keep that electric torch; and your binoculars, of course. Also that small map-case: it's a good one. Also wire-cutters. You can write letters in your field-message-book. Your compass is all right. Add a pair of canvas shoes—they're a god-send after a long day,—an air-pillow, some candle-ends, a tin of vaseline, and a ball of string, and I think you will do. If you find you still have a pound or so in hand, add a few books—something to fall back on, in case supplies fail. Personally, I'm taking *Vanity Fair* and *Pickwick*. But then, I'm old-fashioned."

Bobby took Wagstaffe's advice, with the result that that genial obstructionist, the Quartermaster, smiled quite benignly upon him when he presented his valise; while his brother officers, sternly bidden to revise their equipment, were compelled at the last moment to discriminate frantically between the claims of necessity and luxury—often disastrously.

However, we had all found our feet, and developed into seasoned vagabonds when we set out for the trenches last week. A few days previously we had been inspected by Sir John French himself.

"And that," explained Major Kemp to his subalterns, "usually means dirty work at the cross-roads at no very distant period!"

Major Kemp was right—quite literally right.

Our march took us back to an unfortunate town whose sufferings under intermittent shell fire have already been described. We marched by night, and arrived at breakfast-time. The same evening two companies and a section of machine-gunners were bidden to equip themselves with picks and shovels and parade at dusk. An hour later we found ourselves proceeding cautiously along a murky road close behind the trenches.

The big guns were silent, but the snipers were busy on both sides. A German searchlight was combing out the heavens above: a constant succession of star-shells illumined the earth beneath.

"What are we going to do

to-night, sir?" inquired Bobby Little, heroically resisting an inclination to duck, as a Mauser bullet spat viciously over his head.

"I believe we are going to dig a redoubt behind the trenches," replied Captain Blaikie. "I expect to meet an R.E. officer somewhere about here, and he will tell us the worst. That was a fairly close one, Bobby! Pass the word down quietly that the men are to keep in to each side of the road, and walk as low as they can. Ah, there is our sportsman, I fancy. Good evening!"

A subaltern of that wonderful corps, the Royal Engineers, loomed out of the darkness, removed a cigarette from his mouth, and saluted politely.

"Good evening, sir," he said to Blaikie. "Will you follow me, please? I have marked out each man's digging position with white tape, so they ought to find no difficulty in getting to work. Brought your machine-gun officer?"

The machine-gun officer, Ayling, was called up.

"We are digging a sort of square fort," explained the Engineer, "to hold a battalion. That will mean four guns to mount. I don't know much about machine-guns myself; so perhaps you"—to Ayling—"will walk round with me outside the position, and you can select your own emplacements."

"I shall be charmed," replied Ayling, and Blaikie chuckled.

"I'll just get your infantry to work first," continued the phlegmatic youth. "This way, sir!"

The road at this point ran through a hollow square of trees, and it was explained to the working-party that the trees, roughly, followed the outlines of the redoubt.

"The trenches are about half-finished," added the Engineer. "We had a party from the Seaforths working here last night. Your men have only to carry on where they left off. It's chiefly a matter of filling sandbags and placing them on the parapet." He pointed to a blurred heap in a corner of the wood. "There are fifty thousand there. Leave what you don't want!"

"Where do we get the earth to fill the sandbags?" asked Blaikie. "The trenches, or the middle of the redoubt?"

"Oh, pretty well anywhere," replied the Engineer. "Only, warn your men to be careful not to dig too deep!"

And with this dark saying he lounged off to take Ayling for his promised walk.

"I'll take you along the road a bit, first," he said, "and then we will turn off into the field where the corner of the redoubt is, and you can look at things from the outside."

Ayling thanked him, and stepped somewhat higher than usual, as a bullet struck the ground at his feet.

"Extraordinary how few casualties one gets," continued the Sapper chattily. "Their snipers go potting away all night, but they don't often get

anybody. By the way, they have a machine-gun trained on this road, but they only loose it off every second night. Methodical beggars!"

"Did they loose it off last night?"

"No. To-night's the night. Have you finished here?"

"Yes, thanks!"

"Righto! We'll go to the next corner. You'll get a first-class field of fire there, I should say."

The second position was duly inspected, the only incident of interest being the bursting of a star-shell directly overhead.

"Better lie down for a minute," suggested the Engineer.

Ayling, who had been struggling with a strong inclination to do so for some time, promptly complied.

"Just like the Crystal Palace on a benefit night!" observed his guide admiringly, as the landscape was lit up with a white glare. "Now you can see your position beautifully. You can fire obliquely in this direction, and then do a first-class enfilade if the trenches get rushed."

"I see," said Ayling, surveying the position with real interest. He was beginning to enjoy selecting gun-emplacements which really mattered. It was a change from nine months of "eye-wash."

When the German star-shell had spent itself they crossed the road, to the rear of the redoubt, and marked the other two emplacements — in comparative safety now.

"The only trouble about this place," said Ayling, as he surveyed the last position, "is that my fire will be masked by that house, with the clump of trees beside it."

The Engineer produced a small note-book, and wrote in it by the light of a convenient star-shell.

"Righto!" he said. "I'll have the whole caboodle pushed over for you by to-morrow night. Anything else?"

Ayling began to enjoy himself. After you have spent nine months in an unprofitable attempt to combine practical machine-gun tactics with a scrupulous respect for private property, the realisation that you may now gratify your destructive instincts to the full comes as a welcome and luxurious shock.

"Thanks," he said. "You might flatten out that haystack, too."

They found the others hard at work when they returned. Captain Blaikie was directing operations from the centre of the redoubt.

"I say," he said, as the Engineer sat down beside him, "I'm afraid we're doing a good deal of body-snatching. This place is absolutely full of little wooden crosses."

"Germans," replied the Engineer laconically.

"How long have they been —here?"

"Since October."

"So I should imagine," said Blaikie, with feeling.

"The crosses aren't much

guide, either," continued the Engineer. "The deceased are simply all over the place. The best plan is to dig until you come to a blanket. (There are usually two or three to a blanket.) Then tell off a man to flatten down clay over the place at once, and try somewhere else. It is a rotten job, though, however you look at it."

"Have you been here long?" inquired Bobby Little, who had come across the road for a change of air.

"Long enough! But I'm not on duty continuously. I am Box. Cox takes over tomorrow." He rose to his feet and looked at his watch.

"You ought to move off by half-past one, sir," he said to Blaikie. "It begins to get light after that, and the Bosches have three shells for that cross-road over there down in their time-table at two-fifteen. They're a hide-bound lot, but punctual!"

"Thanks," said Blaikie. "I shall not neglect your advice. It is half-past eleven now. Come along, Bobby, and we'll see how old Ayling is getting on."

Steadily, hour by hour, in absolute silence, the work went on. There was no talking, but (under extenuating circumstances) smoking was permitted. Periodically, as the star-shells burst into brilliance overhead, the workers sank down behind a parapet, or, if there was no time, stood rigid—the one thing to avoid upon these occasions is movement of any kind—and gave the snipers a chance. It was not pleasant, but it was duty; and the word duty has become a mighty force in "Ki" these days. No one was hit, which was remarkable, when you consider what an artist a German sniper is. Possibly the light of the star-shells was deceptive, or possibly there is some truth in the general rumour that the Saxons, who hold this part of the line, are well-disposed towards us, and conduct their offensive operations with a tactful blend of constant firing and bad shooting, which, while it satisfies the Prussians, causes no serious inconvenience to Thomas Atkins.

At a quarter-past one a subdued order ran round the trenches; the men fell in on the sheltered side of the plantation; picks and shovels were checked; rifles and equipment were resumed; and the party stole silently away to the cross-road, where the three shells were timed to arrive at two-fifteen. When they did so, with true Teutonic punctuality, an hour later, our friends were well on their way home to billets and bed—with the dawn breaking behind them, the larks getting to work overhead, and all the infected air of the German graveyard swept out of their lungs by the dew of the morning.

As for that imperturbable philosopher, Box, he sat down with a cigarette, and waited for Cox.

XVII. THE NEW WARFARE.

The trench system has one thing to recommend it. It tidies things up a bit.

For the first few months after the war broke out confusion reigned supreme. Belgium and the north of France were one huge jumbled battlefield, rather like a public park on a Saturday afternoon—one of those parks where promiscuous football is permitted. Friend and foe were inextricably mingled, and the direction of the goal was uncertain. If you rode into a village, you might find it occupied by a Highland regiment or a squadron of Uhlans. If you dimly discerned troops marching side by side with you in the dawning, it was by no means certain that they would prove to be your friends. On the other hand, it was never safe to assume that a battalion which you saw hastily entrenching itself against your approach was German. It might belong to your own brigade. There was no front and no rear, so direction counted for nothing. The country swarmed with troops which had been left "in the air," owing to their own too rapid advance, or the equally rapid retirement of their supporters; with scattered details trying to rejoin their units; or with despatch riders hunting for a peripatetic Divisional Headquarters. Snipers shot both sides impartially. It was all most upsetting.

Well, as already indicated, the trench system has put all that right. The trenches now run continuously—a long, irregular, but perfectly definite line of cleavage — from the North Sea to the Vosges. Everybody has been carefully sorted out—human beings on one side, Germans on the other. ("Like the Zoo," observes Captain Wagstaffe.) Nothing could be more suitable. *You're there, and I'm here, so what do we care?* in fact.

The result is an agreeable blend of war and peace. This week, for instance, our battalion has been undergoing a sort of rest-cure a few miles from the hottest part of the firing line. (We had a fairly heavy spell of work last week.) In the morning we wash our clothes, and perform a few mild martial exercises. In the afternoon we sleep, in all degrees of *déshabille*, under the trees in an orchard. In the evening we play football, or bathe in the canal, or lie on our backs on the grass, watching our aeroplanes buzzing home to roost, attended by German shrapnel. We could not have done this in the autumn. Now, thanks to our trenches, a few miles away, we are as safe here as in the wilds of Argyllshire or West Kensington.

But there are drawbacks to everything. The fact is, a trench is that most uninteresting of human devices, a compromise. It is neither satisfactory as a domicile nor

efficient as a weapon of offence. The most luxurious dug-out; the most artistic window-box —these, in spite of all biassed assertions to the contrary, compare unfavourably with a flat in Knightsbridge. On the other hand, the knowledge that you are keeping yourself tolerably immune from the assaults of your enemy is heavily discounted by the fact that the enemy is equally immune from yours. In other words, you "get no forrader" with a trench; and the one thing which we are all anxious to do out here is to bring this war to a speedy and gory conclusion, and get home to hot baths and regular meals.

So a few days ago we were not at all surprised to be informed, officially, that trench-life is to be definitely abandoned, and Hun-hustling to begin in earnest.

(To be just, this decision was made months ago: the difficulty was to put it into execution. The winter weather was dreadful. The enemy were many and we were few. In Germany, the devil's forge at Essen was roaring night and day: in Great Britain, Trades Union bosses were carefully adjusting the respective claims of patriotism and personal dignity before taking their coats off. So we cannot lay our want of progress to the charge of that dogged band of Greathearts which has been holding on, and holding on, and holding on — while the people at home were making up for lost time—ever since the barbarian was hurled back from the Marne to the Aisne and confined behind his earthen barrier. We shall win this war one day, and most of the credit will go, as usual, to those who are in at the finish. But — when we assign the glory and the praise, let us not forget those who stood up to the first rush. The new armies which are pouring across the Channel this month will bring us victory in the end. Let us bare our heads, then, in all reverence, to the memory of those battered, decimated, indomitable legions which saved us from utter extinction at the beginning.)

The situation appears to be that if we get through—and no one seems to doubt that we shall: the difficulty lies in staying there when you have got through—we shall be committed at once to an endless campaign of village-fighting. This country is as flat as Cambridgeshire. Every yard of it is under cultivation. The landscape is dotted with farmsteadings. There is a group of cottages or an *estaminet* at every cross-roads. When our great invading line sweeps forward, each one of these buildings will be held by the enemy, and must be captured, house by house, room by room, and used as a base for another rush.

And how is this to be done?

Well, it will be no military secret by the time these lines appear. It is no secret now. The answer to the conundrum is—Bombs!

To-day, out here, bombs are absolutely *dernier cri*. We

talk of nothing else. We speak about rifles and bayonets as if they were so many bows and arrows. It is true that the modern Lee-Enfield and Mauser claim to be the most precise and deadly weapons of destruction ever devised. But they were intended for proper, gentlemanly warfare, with the opposing sides set out in straight lines, a convenient distance apart. In the hand-to-hand butchery which calls itself war to-day, the rifle is rapidly becoming *démodé*. For long ranges you require machine-guns; for short, bombs and hand-grenades. Can you empty a cottage by firing a single rifle-shot in at the door? Can you exterminate twenty Germans in a fortified back-parlour by a single thrust with a bayonet? Never! But you can do both these things with a jam-tin stuffed with dynamite and scrap-iron.

So the bomb has come to its own, and has brought with it certain changes—tactical, organic, and domestic. To take the last first, the bomb-officer, hitherto a despised underling, popularly (but maliciously) reputed to have been appointed to his present post through inability to handle a platoon, has suddenly attained a position of dazzling eminence. From being a mere super, he has become a star. In fact, he threatens to dispute the pre-eminence of that other regimental parvenu, the Machine-Gun Officer. He is now the confidant of Colonels, and consorts upon terms of easy familiarity with Brigade Majors. He holds himself coldly aloof from the rest of us, brooding over the greatness of his responsibilities; and when he speaks, it is to refer darkly to "detonators," and "primers," and "time-fuses." And we, who once addressed him derisively as "Anarchist," crowd round him and hang upon his lips.

The reason is that in future it is to be a case of—"For every man, a bomb or two"; and it is incumbent upon us, if we desire to prevent these infernal machines from exploding while yet in our custody, to attain the necessary details as to their construction and tender spots by the humiliating process of conciliating the Bomb Officer.

So far as we have mastered the mysteries of the craft, there appear to be four types of bomb in store for us—or rather, for Brother Bosche. They are:—

(1) The hair-brush.
(2) The cricket-ball.
(3) The policeman's truncheon.
(4) The jam-tin.

The hair-brush is very like the ordinary hair-brush, except that the bristles are replaced by a solid block of high-explosive. The policeman's truncheon has gay streamers of tape tied to its tail, to ensure that it falls to the ground nose downwards. Both these bombs explode on impact, and it is unadvisable to knock them against anything—say the back of the trench—when throwing them. The cricket-ball works by a time-fuse. Its

manipulation is simplicity itself. The removal of a certain pin releases a spring which lights an internal fuse, timed to explode the bomb in five seconds. You take the bomb in your right hand, remove the pin, and cast the thing madly from you. The jam-tin variety appeals more particularly to the sportsman, as the element of chance enters largely into its successful use. It is timed to explode about ten seconds after the lighting of the fuse. It is therefore unwise to throw it too soon, as there will be ample time for your opponent to pick it up and throw it back. On the other hand, it is unwise to hold on too long, as the fuse is uncertain in its action, and is given to short cuts.

Such is the tactical revolution promised by the advent of the bomb and other new engines of war. As for its effect upon regimental and company organisation, listen to the plaintive voice of Major Kemp—

"I was once — only a few months ago—commander of a company of two hundred and fifty disciplined soldiers. I still nominally command that company, but they have developed into a heterogeneous mob of specialists. If I detail one of my subalterns to do a job of work, he reminds me that he is a bomb-expert, or a professor of sandbagging, or director of the knuckle-duster section, or Lord High Thrower of Stink-pots, and as such has no time to play about with such a common thing as a platoon. As for the men, they simply laugh in the sergeant-major's face. They are 'experts,' if you please, and are struck off all fatigues and company duty! It was bad enough when Ayling pinched fourteen of my best men for his filthy machine-guns; now, the company has practically degenerated into an academy of variety artists. The only occasion upon which I ever see them all together is pay-day!"

Meanwhile, the word has just gone forth, quietly and without fuss, that we are to uproot ourselves from our present billets, and be ready to move at 5 A.M. to-morrow morning.

Is this the Big Push at last?

II.

We have been waiting for the best part of two days and nights listening to the thunder of the big guns, but as yet we have received no invitation to "butt in."

"Plenty of time yet," explains Captain Blaikie to his subalterns, in reply to Bobby Little's expressions of impatience. "It's this way. We start by 'isolating' a section of the enemy's line, and pound it with artillery for about forty-eight hours. Then the guns knock off, and the people in front rush the German first-line trenches. After that they

push on to their second and third lines; and if they can capture and *hold them*—well, that's where the fun comes in. We go for all we are worth through the gaps the others have made, and carry on the big push, and keep the Bosches on the run until they drop in their tracks! That's the situation. If we are called up to-night or to-morrow, it will mean that things are going well. If not, it means that the attack has failed—or, very likely, has succeeded, but it has been found impossible to secure the position—and a lot of good chaps have been scuppered, all for nothing."

III.

Next morning has arrived, and with it the news that our services will not be required. The attack, it appears, was duly launched, and succeeded beyond all expectations. The German line was broken, and report says that four Divisions poured through the gap. They captured the second-line trenches, then the third; and penetrated far into the enemy's rear.

Then—from their front and flanks, artillery and machine-guns opened fire upon them. They were terribly exposed; possibly they had been lured into a trap. At any rate, the process of "isolation" had not been carried far enough. One thing, and only one thing, could have saved them from destruction and their enterprise from disaster—the support of big guns, and big guns, and more big guns. These could have silenced the hostile tornado of shrapnel and bullets, and the position could have been made good.

But—apparently the supply of big-gun ammunition is not quite so copious as it might be. We have only been at war ten months, and people at home are still a little dazed with the novelty of their situation. Out here, we are reasonable men, and we realise that it requires some time to devise a system for supplying munitions which shall hurt the feelings of no pacifist, which shall interfere with no man's holiday or glass of beer, which shall insult no honest toiler by compelling him to work side by side with those who are not of his industrial tabernacle, and which shall imperil no statesman's seat in Parliament. Things will be all right presently.

Meanwhile, the attacking party fell back whence they came—but no longer four full Divisions.

(*To be continued.*)

THE THIRTY-NINE STEPS.

BY H. DE V.

CHAPTER VI.—THE ADVENTURE OF THE BALD ARCHÆOLOGIST.

I SPENT the night on a shelf of the hillside, in the lee of a boulder where the heather grew long and soft. It was a cold business, for I had neither coat nor waistcoat. Those were in Mr Turnbull's keeping, as was Scudder's little book, my watch and—worst of all—my pipe and tobacco pouch. Only my money accompanied me in my belt, and about half a pound of ginger biscuits in my trousers pocket.

I supped off half those biscuits, and by worming myself deep into the heather got some kind of warmth. My spirits had risen, and I was beginning to enjoy this crazy game of hide-and-seek. So far I had been miraculously lucky. The milkman, the literary innkeeper, Sir Harry, the roadman, and the idiotic Marmie, were all pieces of undeserved good fortune. Somehow the first success gave me a feeling that I was going to pull the thing through. My chief trouble was that I was desperately hungry. When a Jew shoots himself in the City and there is an inquest, the newspapers usually report that the deceased was "well-nourished." I remember thinking that they would not call me well-nourished if I broke my neck in a bog-hole. I lay and tortured myself—for the ginger biscuits merely emphasised the aching void—with the memory of all the good food I had thought so little of in London. There were Paddock's crisp sausages and fragrant shavings of bacon, and shapely poached eggs—how often I had turned up my nose at them! There were the cutlets they did at the club, and a particular ham that stood on the cold table, for which my soul lusted. My thoughts hovered over all varieties of mortal edible, and finally settled on a porterhouse steak and a quart of bitter with a welsh rabbit to follow. In longing hopelessly for these dainties I fell asleep.

I woke very cold and stiff about an hour after dawn. It took me a little while to remember where I was, for I had been very weary and had slept heavily. I saw first the pale blue sky through a net of heather, then a big shoulder of hill, and then my own boots placed neatly in a blaeberry bush. I raised myself on my arms and looked down into the valley, and that one look set me lacing up my boots in mad haste. For there were men

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below, not more than a quarter of a mile off, spaced out on the hillside like a fan, and beating the heather. Marmie had not been slow in looking for his revenge.

I crawled out of my shelf into the cover of a boulder, and from it gained a shallow trench which slanted up the mountain face. This led me presently into the narrow gully of a burn, by way of which I scrambled to the top of the ridge. From there I looked back, and saw that I was still undiscovered. My pursuers were patiently quartering the hillside and moving upwards.

Keeping behind the skyline I ran for maybe half a mile, till I judged I was above the uppermost end of the glen. Then I showed myself, and was instantly noted by one of the flankers, who passed the word to the others. I heard cries coming up from below, and saw that the line of search had changed its direction. I pretended to retreat over the skyline, but instead went back the way I had come, and in twenty minutes was behind the ridge overlooking my sleeping place. From that view-point I had the satisfaction of seeing the pursuit streaming up the hill at the top of the glen on a hopelessly false scent. I had before me a choice of routes, and I chose a ridge which made an angle with the one I was on, and so would soon put a deep glen between me and my enemies. The exercise had warmed my blood, and I was beginning to enjoy myself amazingly. As I went I breakfasted on the dusty remnants of the ginger biscuits.

I knew very little about the country, and I hadn't a notion what I was going to do. I trusted to the strength of my legs, but I was well aware that those behind me would be familiar with the lie of the land, and that my ignorance would be a heavy handicap. I saw in front of me a sea of hills, rising very high towards the south, but northwards breaking down into broad ridges which separated wide and shallow dales. The ridge I had chosen seemed to sink after a mile or two to a moor which lay like a pocket in the uplands. That seemed as good a direction to take as any other.

My stratagem had given me a fair start — call it twenty minutes—and I had the width of a glen behind me before I saw the first heads of the pursuers. The police had evidently called in local talent to their aid, and the men I could see had the appearance of herds or gamekeepers. They hallooed at the sight of me, and I waved my hand. Two dived into the glen and began to climb my ridge, while the others kept their own side of the hill. I felt as if I were taking part in a schoolboy game of hare and hounds.

But very soon it began to seem less of a game. Those fellows behind were hefty men on their native heath. Looking back I saw that only three were following direct, and I guessed that the others had fetched a circuit to cut me off.

My lack of local knowledge might very well be my undoing, and I resolved to get out of this tangle of glens to the pocket of moor I had seen from the tops. I must so increase my distance as to get clear away from them, and I believed I could do this if I could find the right ground for it. If there had been cover I would have tried a bit of stalking, but on these bare slopes you could see a fly a mile off. My hope must be in the length of my legs and the soundness of my wind, but I needed easier ground for that, for I was not bred a mountaineer. How I longed for a good Afrikander pony!

I put on a great spurt and got off my ridge and down into the moor before any figures appeared on the skyline behind me. I crossed a burn, and came out on a highroad which made a pass between two glens. All in front of me was a big field of heather sloping up to a crest which was crowned with an odd feather of trees. In the dyke by the roadside was a gate, from which a grass-grown track led over the first wave of the moor. I jumped the dyke and followed it, and after a few hundred yards—as soon as it was out of sight of the highway—the grass stopped and it became a very respectable road, which was evidently kept with some care. Clearly it ran to a house, and I began to think of doing the same. Hitherto my luck had held, and it might be that my best chance would be found in this remote dwelling. Anyhow there were trees there, and that meant cover.

I did not follow the road, but the burnside which flanked it on the right, where the bracken grew deep and the high banks made a tolerable screen. It was well I did so, for no sooner had I gained the hollow than, looking back, I saw the pursuit topping the ridge from which I had descended.

After that I did not look back; I had no time. I ran up the burnside, crawling over the open places, and for a large part wading in the shallow stream. I found a deserted cottage with a row of phantom peat-stacks and an overgrown garden. Then I was among young hay, and very soon had come to the edge of a plantation of wind-blown firs. From there I saw the chimneys of the house smoking a few hundred yards to my left. I forsook the burnside, crossed another dyke, and almost before I knew was on a rough lawn. A glance back told me that I was well out of sight of the pursuit, which had not yet passed the first lift of the moor.

The lawn was a very rough place, cut with a scythe instead of a mower, and planted with beds of scrubby rhododendrons. A brace of black-game, which are not usually garden birds, rose at my approach. The house before me was the ordinary moorland farm, with a more pretentious whitewashed wing added. Attached to this wing was a glass verandah, and through the glass I saw the face of an elderly gentleman meekly watching me.

I stalked over the border of coarse hill gravel and entered

the open verandah door. Within was a pleasant room, glass on one side, and on the other a mass of books. More books showed in an inner room. On the floor, instead of tables, stood cases such as you see in a museum, filled with coins and queer stone implements. There was a knee-hole desk in the middle, and seated at it, with some papers and open volumes before him, was the benevolent old gentleman. His face was round and shiny, like Mr Pickwick's, big glasses were stuck on the end of his nose, and the top of his head was as bright and bare as a glass bottle. He never moved when I entered, but raised his placid eyebrows and waited on me to speak.

It was not an easy job, with about five minutes to spare, to tell a stranger who I was and what I wanted, and to win his aid. I did not attempt it. There was something about the eye of the man before me, something so keen and knowledgeable, that I could not find a word. I simply stared at him and stuttered.

"You seem in a hurry, my friend," he said slowly.

I nodded towards the glass. It gave a prospect across the moor through a gap in the plantation, and revealed certain figures half a mile off straggling through the heather.

"Ah, I see," he said, and took up a pair of field-glasses, through which he patiently scrutinised the figures.

"A fugitive from justice, eh? Well, we'll go into the matter at our leisure. Meantime I object to my privacy being broken in upon by the clumsy rural policemen. Go into my study, and you will see two doors facing you. Take the one on the left and close it behind you. You will be perfectly safe." And this extraordinary man took up his pen again.

I did as I was bid, and found myself in a little dark chamber which smelt of chemicals, and was lit only by a tiny window high up in the wall. The door had swung behind me with a click like the door of a safe. Once again I had found an unexpected sanctuary.

All the same I was not comfortable. There was something about the old gentleman which puzzled and rather terrified me. He had been too easy and ready, almost as if he had expected me. And his eyes had been horribly intelligent.

No sound came to me in that dark place. For all I knew the police might be searching the house, and if they did they would want to know what was behind this door. I tried to possess my soul in patience, and to forget how hungry I was. Then I took a more cheerful view. The old gentleman could scarcely refuse me a meal, and I fell to reconstructing my breakfast. Bacon and eggs would content me, but I wanted the better part of a flitch of bacon and half a hundred eggs. And then, while my mouth was watering in anticipation, there was a click and the door stood open.

I emerged into the sunlight

to find the master of the house sitting in a deep arm-chair in the room he called his study, and regarding me with curious eyes.

"Have they gone?" I asked.

"They have gone. I convinced them that you had crossed the hill. I do not choose that the police should come between me and one whom I am delighted to honour. This is a lucky morning for you, Mr Richard Hannay."

As he spoke his eyelids seemed to tremble and to fall a little over his keen grey eyes. In a flash the phrase of Scudder's came back to me, when he had described the man he most dreaded in the world. He had said that he "could hood his eyes like a hawk." Then I saw that I had walked straight into the enemy's headquarters. My first impulse was to throttle the old ruffian and make for the open air. He seemed to anticipate my intention, for he smiled gently, and nodded to the door behind me. I turned, and saw two men-servants who had me covered with pistols.

He knew my name, but he had never seen me before. And as the reflection darted across my mind I saw a slender chance.

"I don't know what you mean," I said roughly. "And who are you calling Richard Hannay? My name's Ainslie."

"So?" he said, still smiling. "But of course you have others. We won't quarrel about a name."

I was pulling myself together now, and I reflected that my garb, lacking coat and waistcoat and collar, would at any rate not betray me. I put on my surliest face and shrugged my shoulders.

"I suppose you're going to give me up after all, and I call it a damned dirty trick. My God, I wish I had never seen that cursed motor-car! Here's the money and be damned to you," and I flung four sovereigns on the table.

He opened his eyes a little. "Oh no, I shall not give you up. My friends and I will have a little private settlement with you, that is all. You know a little too much, Mr Hannay. You are a clever actor, but not quite clever enough." He spoke with assurance, but I could see the dawning of a doubt in his mind.

"Oh, for God's sake stop jawing," I cried. "Everything's against me. I haven't had a bit of luck since I came on shore at Leith. What's the harm in a poor devil with an empty stomach picking up some money he finds in a bust-up motor-car? That's all I done, and for that I've been chivvied for two days by those blasted bobbies over those blasted hills. I tell you I'm fair sick of it. You can do what you like, old boy! Ned Ainslie's got no fight left in him."

I could see that the doubt was gaining.

"Will you oblige me with the story of your recent doings?" he asked.

"I can't, guv'nor," I said

in a real beggar's whine. "I've not had a bite to eat for two days. Give me a mouthful of food, and then you'll hear God's truth."

I must have showed my hunger in my face, for he signalled to one of the men in the doorway. A bit of cold pie was brought and a glass of beer, and I wolfed them down like a pig — or rather, like Ned Ainslie, for I was keeping up my character. In the middle of my meal he spoke suddenly to me in German, but I turned on him a face as blank as a stone wall.

Then I told him my story —how I had come off an Archangel ship at Leith a week ago, and was making my way overland to my brother at Wigtown. I had run short of cash — I hinted vaguely at a spree — and I was pretty well on my uppers when I had come on a hole in a hedge and, looking through, had seen a big motor-car lying in the burn. I had poked about to see what had happened, and had found three sovereigns lying on the seat and one on the floor. There was nobody there or any sign of an owner, so I had pocketed the cash. But somehow the law had got after me. When I had tried to change a sovereign in a baker's shop, the woman had cried on the police, and a little later, when I was washing my face in a burn, I had been nearly gripped, and had only got away by leaving my coat and waistcoat behind me.

"They can have the money back," I cried, "for a fat lot of good it's done me. Those perishers are all down on a poor man. Now, if it had been you, guv'nor, that had found the quids, nobody would have troubled you."

"You're a good liar, Hannay," he said.

I flew into a rage. "Stop fooling, damn you! I tell you my name's Ainslie, and I never heard of any one called Hannay in my born days. I'd sooner have the police than you with your Hannays and your monkey-faced pistol tricks. No, guv'nor, I don't mean that. I'm much obliged to you for the grub. I'll thank you to let me go now the coast's clear."

It was obvious that he was badly puzzled. You see he had never seen me, and my appearance must have altered considerably from my photographs, if he had got one of them. I was pretty smart and well dressed in London, and now I was a regular tramp.

"I do not propose to let you go. If you are what you say you are, you will soon have a chance of clearing yourself. If you are what I believe you are, I do not think you will see the light much longer."

He rang a bell, and a third servant appeared from the verandah.

"I want the Lanchester in five minutes," he said. "There will be three to luncheon."

Then he looked steadily at

me, and that was the hardest ordeal of all.

There was something weird and devilish in these eyes, cold, malignant, unearthly, and most hellishly clever. They fascinated me like the bright eyes of a snake. I had a strong impulse to throw myself on his mercy and offer to join his side, and if you consider the way I felt about the whole thing you will see that that impulse must have been purely physical, the weakness of a brain mesmerised and mastered by a stronger spirit. But I managed to stick it out and even to grin. "You'll know me next time, guv'nor," I said.

"Karl," he said in German to one of the men in the doorway, "you will put this fellow in the storeroom till I return, and you will be answerable to me for his keeping."

I was marched out of the room with a pistol at each ear.

The storeroom was a damp chamber in what had been the old farmhouse. There was no carpet on the uneven floor, and nothing to sit down on but a school form. It was black as pitch, for the windows were heavily shuttered. I made out by groping that the walls were lined with boxes and barrels and sacks of some heavy stuff. The whole place smelt of mould and disuse. My gaolers turned the key in the door, and I could hear them shifting their feet as they stood on guard outside.

I sat down in the chilly darkness in a very miserable frame of mind. The old boy had gone off in a motor to collect the two ruffians who had interviewed me yesterday. Now, they had seen me as the roadman, and they would remember me, for I was in the same rig. What was a roadman doing twenty miles from his beat, pursued by the police? A question or two would put them on the track. Probably they had seen Mr Turnbull, probably Marmie too; most likely they could link me up with Sir Harry, and then the whole thing would be crystal clear. What chance had I in this moorland house with three desperadoes and their armed servants? I began to think wistfully of the police, now plodding over the hills after my wraith. They at any rate were fellow-countrymen and honest men, and their tender mercies would be kinder than these ghoulish aliens. But they wouldn't have listened to me. That old devil with the eyelids had not taken long to get rid of them. I thought he probably had some kind of graft with the constabulary. Most likely he had letters from Cabinet Ministers saying he was to be given every facility for plotting against Britain. That's the sort of owlish way we run our politics in the Old Country.

The three would be back for lunch, so I hadn't more than a couple of hours to wait. It was simply waiting on destruction, for I could see no way out of this mess. I wished that I

had Scudder's courage, for I am free to confess I didn't feel any great fortitude. The only thing that kept me going was that I was pretty furious. It made me boil with rage to think of those three spies getting the pull on me like this. I hoped that at any rate I might be able to twist one of their necks before they downed me.

The more I thought of it the angrier I grew, and I had to get up and move about the room. I tried the shutters, but they were the kind that lock with a key, and I couldn't move them. From the outside came the faint clucking of hens in the warm sun. Then I groped among the sacks and boxes. I couldn't open the latter, and the sacks seemed to be full of things like dog-biscuits that smelt of cinnamon. But, as I circumnavigated the room, I found a handle in the wall which seemed worth investigating.

It was the door of a wall cupboard — what they call a "press" in Scotland,—and it was locked. I shook it, and it seemed rather flimsy. For want of something better to do I put out my strength on that door, getting some purchase on the handle by looping my braces round it. Presently the thing gave with a crash which I thought would bring in my warders to inquire. I waited for a bit, and then started to explore the cupboard shelves.

There was a multitude of queer things there. I found an odd vesta or two in my trouser pockets and struck a light. It went out in a second, but it showed me one thing. There was a little stock of electric torches on one shelf. I picked up one, and found it was in working order.

With the torch to help me I investigated further. There were bottles and cases of queer-smelling stuffs, chemicals no doubt for experiments, and there were coils of fine copper wire and yanks and yanks of a thin oiled silk. There was a box of detonators, and a lot of cord for fuses. Then away at the back of a shelf I found a stout brown cardboard box, and inside it a wooden case. I managed to wrench it open, and within lay half a dozen little grey bricks, each a couple of inches square.

I took up one, and found that it crumbled easily in my hand. Then I smelt it and put my tongue to it. After that I sat down to think. I hadn't been a mining engineer for nothing, and I knew lentonite when I saw it.

With one of these bricks I could blow the house to smithereens. I had used the stuff in Rhodesia and knew its power. But the trouble was that my knowledge wasn't exact. I had forgotten the proper charge and the right way of preparing it, and I wasn't sure about the timing. I had only a vague notion, too, as to its power, for though I had used it I had not handled it with my own fingers.

But it was a chance, the only possible chance. It was a mighty risk, but against it was

an absolute black certainty. If I used it the odds were, as I reckoned, about five to one in favour of my blowing myself into the tree-tops; but if I didn't I should very likely be occupying a six-foot hole in the garden by the evening. That was the way I had to look at it. The prospect was pretty dark either way, but anyhow there was a chance, both for myself and for my country.

The remembrance of little Scudder decided me. It was about the beastliest moment of my life, for I'm no good at these cold-blooded resolutions. Still I managed to rake up the pluck to set my teeth and choke back the horrid doubts that flooded in on me. I simply shut off my mind and pretended I was doing an experiment as simple as Guy Fawkes fireworks.

I got a detonator, and fixed it to a couple of feet of fuse. Then I took a quarter of a lentonite brick, and buried it near the door below one of the sacks in a crack of the floor, fixing the detonator in it. For all I knew half those boxes might be dynamite. If the cupboard held such deadly explosives, why not the boxes? In that case there would be a glorious skyward journey for me and the German servants and about an acre of the surrounding country. There was also the risk that the detonation might set off the other bricks in the cupboard, for I had forgotten most that I knew about lentonite. But it didn't do to begin thinking about the possibilities. The odds were horrible, but I had to take them.

I ensconced myself just below the sill of the window, and lit the fuse. Then I waited for a moment or two. There was dead silence—only a shuffle of heavy boots in the passage, and the peaceful cluck of hens from the warm out-of-doors. I commended my soul to my Maker, and wondered where I would be in five seconds.

A great wave of heat seemed to surge upwards from the floor, and hang for a blistering instant in the air. Then the wall opposite me flashed into a golden yellow and dissolved with a rending thunder that hammered my brain into a pulp. Something dropped on me, catching the point of my left shoulder. And then I think I became unconscious.

My stupor can scarcely have lasted beyond a few seconds. I felt myself being choked by thick yellow fumes, and struggled out of the debris to my feet. Somewhere behind me I felt fresh air. The jambs of the window had fallen, and through the ragged rent the smoke was pouring out to the summer noon. I stepped over the broken lintel, and found myself standing in a yard in a dense and acrid fog. I felt very sick and ill, but I could move my limbs, and I staggered blindly forward away from the house.

A small mill-lade ran in a wooden aqueduct at the other side of the yard, and into this I fell. The cool water revived me, and I had just enough wits left to think of escape. I

squirmed up the lade among the slippery green slime till I reached the mill-wheel. Then I wriggled through the axle hole into the old mill and tumbled on to a bed of chaff. A nail caught the seat of my trousers, and I left a wisp of heather-mixture behind me.

The mill had been long out of use. The ladders were rotten with age, and in the loft the rats had gnawed great holes in the floor. Nausea shook me, and a wheel in my head kept turning, while my left shoulder and arm seemed to be stricken with the palsy. I looked out of the window and saw a fog still hanging over the house and smoke escaping from an upper window. Please God I had set the place on fire, for I could hear confused cries coming from the other side. But I had no time to linger, since this mill was obviously a bad hiding-place. Any one looking for me would naturally follow the lade, and I made certain the search would begin as soon as they found that my body was not in the storeroom. From another window I saw that on the far side of the mill stood an old stone dovecot. If I could get there without leaving tracks I might find a hiding-place, for I argued that my enemies, if they thought I could move, would conclude I had made for open country, and would go seeking me on the moor.

I crawled down the broken ladder, scattering chaff behind me to cover my footsteps. I did the same on the mill floor, and on the threshold where the door hung on broken hinges. Peeping out, I saw that between me and the dovecot was a piece of bare cobbled ground, where no footmarks would show. Also it was mercifully hid by the mill buildings from any view from the house. I slipped across the space, got to the back of the dovecot and prospected a way of ascent.

That was one of the hardest jobs I ever took on. My shoulder and arm ached like hell, and I was so sick and giddy that I was always on the verge of falling. But I managed it somehow. By the use of outjutting stones and gaps in the masonry and a tough ivy root I got to the top in the end. There was a little parapet behind which I found space to lie down. Then I proceeded to go off into an old-fashioned swoon.

I woke with a burning head and the sun glaring in my face. For a long time I lay motionless, for those horrible fumes seemed to have loosened my joints and dulled my brain. Sounds came to me from the house—men speaking throatily and the throbbing of a stationary car. There was a little gap in the parapet to which I wriggled, and from which I had some sort of prospect of the yard. I saw figures come out—a servant with his head bound up, and then a younger man in knickerbockers. They were looking for something, and moved towards the mill. Then one of them caught sight of the wisp of cloth on the nail, and cried out to the other.

They both went back to the house, and brought two more to look at it. I saw the rotund figure of my late captor, and I thought I made out the man with the lisp. I noticed that all had pistols.

For half an hour they ransacked the mill. I could hear them kicking over the barrels and pulling up the rotten planking. Then they came outside, and stood just below the dovecot, arguing fiercely. The servant with the bandage was being soundly rated. I heard them fiddling with the door of the dovecot, and for one horrid moment I thought they were coming up. Then they thought better of it, and went back to the house.

All that long blistering afternoon I lay baking on the roof-top. Thirst was my chief torment. My tongue was like a stick, and to make it worse I could hear the cool drip of water from the mill-lade. I watched the course of the little stream as it came in from the moor, and my fancy followed it to the top of the glen, where it must issue from an icy fountain fringed with cool ferns and mosses. I would have given a thousand pounds to plunge my face into that.

I had a fine prospect of the whole ring of moorland. I saw the car speed away with two occupants, and a man on a hill pony riding east. I judged they were looking for me, and I wished them joy of their quest. But I saw something else more interesting. The house stood almost on the summit of a swell of moorland which crowned a sort of plateau, and there was no higher point nearer than the big hills six miles off. The actual summit, as I have mentioned, was a biggish clump of trees—firs mostly, with a few ashes and beeches. On the dovecot I was almost on a level with the tree-tops, and could see what lay beyond. The wood was not solid, but only a ring, and inside was an oval of green turf, for all the world like a big cricket-field. I didn't take long to guess what it was. It was an aerodrome, and a secret one. The place had been most cunningly chosen. For suppose any one were watching an aeroplane descending here, he would think it had gone over the hill beyond the trees. As the place was on the top of a rise in the midst of a big amphitheatre any observer from any direction would conclude it had passed out of view beyond the hill. Only a man very close at hand would realise that the aeroplane had not gone over but had descended in the midst of the wood. An observer with a telescope on one of the higher hills might have discovered the truth, but only herds went there, and herds do not carry spy-glasses. When I looked from the dovecot I could see far away a blue line which I knew was the sea, and I grew furious to think that our enemies had this secret conning-tower to rake our waterways.

Then I reflected that if that aeroplane came back the chances were ten to one that I would be discovered. So

through the afternoon I lay and prayed for the coming of darkness, and glad I was when the sun went down over the big western hills and the twilight haze crept over the moor. The aeroplane was late. The gloaming was far advanced when I heard the beat of wings and saw it vol-planing downward to its home in the wood. Lights twinkled for a bit and there was much coming and going from the house. Then the dark fell, and silence.

Thank God it was a black night. The moon was well on its last quarter and would not rise till late. My thirst was too great to allow me to tarry, so about nine o'clock, so far as I could judge, I started to descend. It wasn't easy, and half-way down I heard the back-door of the house open, and saw the gleam of a lantern against the mill wall. For some agonising minutes I hung by the ivy and prayed that whoever it was would not come round by the dovecot. Then the light disappeared, and I dropped as softly as I could on to the hard soil of the yard.

I crawled on my belly in the lee of a stone dyke till I reached the fringe of trees which surrounded the house. If I had known how to do it I would have tried to put that aeroplane out of action, but I realised that any attempt would probably be futile. I was pretty certain that there would be some kind of defence round the house, so I went through the wood on hands and knees, feeling carefully every inch before me. It was as well, for presently I came on a wire about two feet from the ground. If I had tripped over that, it would doubtless have rung some bell in the house and I would have been captured.

A hundred yards farther on I found another wire cunningly placed on the edge of a small stream. Beyond that lay the moor, and in five minutes I was deep in bracken and heather. Soon I was round the shoulder of the rise, in the little glen from which the mill-lade flowed. Ten minutes later my face was deep in the spring, and I was soaking down pints of the blessed water. But I did not stop till I had put half a dozen miles between me and that accursed dwelling.

CHAPTER VII.—THE DRY-FLY FISHERMAN.

I sat down on a hill-top and took stock of my position. I wasn't feeling very happy, for my natural thankfulness at my escape was clouded by my severe bodily discomfort. Those lentonite fumes had fairly poisoned me, and the baking hours on the dovecot hadn't helped matters. I had a crushing headache, and felt as sick as a cat. Also my shoulder was in a bad way. At first I thought it was only a bruise, but it seemed to be swelling, and I had no use of my left arm.

My plan was to seek Mr

Turnbull's cottage, recover my garments, and especially Scudder's note-book, and then make for the main line and get back to the south. It seemed to me that the sooner I got in touch with the Foreign Office man, Sir Walter Bullivant, the better. I didn't see how I could get more proof than I had got already. He must just take or leave my story, and anyway with him I would be in better hands than those devilish Germans. I had begun to feel quite kindly towards the British police.

It was a wonderful starry night, and I had not much difficulty about the road. Sir Harry's map had given me the lie of the land, and all I had to do was to steer a point or two west of south-west to come to the stream where I had met the roadman. In all these travels I never knew the names of the places, but I believe this stream was no less than the upper waters of the river Tweed. I calculated I must be about eighteen miles distant, and that meant I could not get there before morning. So I must lie up a day somewhere, for I was too outrageous a figure to be seen in the sunlight. I had neither coat, waistcoat, collar, nor hat, my trousers were badly torn, and my face and hands were black with the explosion. I daresay I had other beauties, for my eyes felt as if they were furiously bloodshot. Altogether I was no spectacle for God-fearing citizens to see on a highroad.

Very soon after daybreak I made an attempt to clean myself in a hill burn, and then approached a herd's cottage, for I was feeling the need of food. The herd was away from home, and his wife was alone, with no neighbour for five miles. She was a decent old body, and a plucky one, for though she got a fright when she saw me, she had an axe handy, and would have used it on any evil-doer. I told her that I had had a fall—I didn't say how—and she saw by my looks that I was pretty sick. Like a true Samaritan she asked no questions, but gave me a bowl of milk with a dash of whisky in it, and let me sit for a little by her kitchen fire. She would have bathed my shoulder, but it ached so badly that I would not let her touch it. I don't know what she took me for—a repentant burglar, perhaps; for when I wanted to pay her for the milk and tendered a sovereign, which was the smallest coin I had, she shook her head and said something about "giving it to them that had a right to it." At this I protested so strongly that I think she believed me honest, for she took the money and gave me a warm new plaid for it, and an old hat of her man's. She showed me how to wrap the plaid round my shoulders, and when I left that cottage I was the living image of the kind of Scotsman you see in the illustrations to Burns's poems. But at any rate I was more or less clad.

It was as well, for the weather changed before mid-

day to a thick drizzle of rain. I found shelter below an overhanging rock in the crook of a burn, where a drift of dead brackens made a tolerable bed. There I managed to sleep till nightfall, waking very cramped and wretched, with my shoulder gnawing like a toothache. I ate the oat-cake and cheese the old wife had given me, and set out again just before the darkening.

I pass over the miseries of that night among the wet hills. There were no stars to steer by, and I had to do the best I could from my memory of the map. Twice I lost my way, and I had some nasty falls into peat-bogs. I had only about ten miles to go as the crow flies, but my mistakes made it nearer twenty. The last bit was completed with set teeth and a very light and dizzy head. But I managed it, and in the early dawn I was knocking at Mr Turnbull's door. The mist lay close and thick, and from the cottage I could not see the highroad.

Mr Turnbull himself opened to me — sober and something more than sober. He was primly dressed in an ancient but well-tended suit of black; he had been shaved not later than the night before; he wore a linen collar; and in his left hand he carried a pocket Bible. At first he did not recognise me.

"Whae are ye that comes stravaigin' here on the Sabbath mornin'?" he asked.

I had lost all count of the days. So the Sabbath was the reason for his strange decorum.

My head was swimming so wildly that I could not frame a coherent answer. But he recognised me and he saw that I was ill.

"Hae ye got my specs?" he asked.

I fetched them out of my trouser pocket and gave him them.

"Ye'll hae come for your jaicket and westcoat," he said. "Come in-bye. Losh, man, ye're terrible dune i' the legs. Haud up till I get ye to a chair."

I perceived I was in for a bout of malaria. I had a good deal of fever in my bones, and the wet night had brought it out, while my shoulder and the effects of the fumes combined to make me feel pretty bad. Before I knew, Mr Turnbull was helping me off with my clothes, and putting me to bed in one of the two cupboards that lined the kitchen walls.

He was a true friend in need, that old roadman. His wife was dead years ago, and since his daughter's marriage he lived alone. For the better part of ten days he did all the rough nursing I needed. I simply wanted to be left in peace while the fever took its course, and when my skin was cool again I found that the bout had more or less cured my shoulder. But it was a baddish go, and though I was out of bed in five days, it took me some time to get my legs again.

He went out each morning, leaving me milk for the day,

and locking the door behind him; and came in in the evening to sit silent in the chimney corner. Not a soul came near the place. When I was getting better, he never bothered me with a question. Several times he fetched me a two-days' old *Scotsman*, and I noticed that the interest in the Portland Place murder seemed to have died down. There was no mention of it, and I could find very little about anything except a thing called the General Assembly—some ecclesiastical spree, I gathered.

One day he produced my belt from a lockfast drawer. "There's a terrible heap o' siller in't," he said. "You'd better coont it to see it's a' there."

He never even inquired my name. I asked him if anybody had been around making inquiries subsequent to my spell at the roadmaking.

"Ay, there was a man in a motor-cawr. He speired whae had ta'en my place that day, and I let on I thocht him daft. But he keepit on at me, and syne I said he maun be thinkin' o' my gude-brither frae the Cleuch that whiles lent me a haun'. He was a wersh-lookin' soul, and I couldna understand the half o' his English tongue."

I was getting pretty restless those last days, and as soon as I felt myself fit I decided to be off. That was not till the twelfth day of June, and as luck would have it a drover went past that morning taking some cattle to Moffat. He was a man named Hislop, a friend of Turnbull's, and he came in to his breakfast with us and offered to take me with him.

I made Turnbull accept five pounds for my lodging, and a hard job I had of it. There never was a more independent being. He grew positively rude when I pressed him, and shy and red, and took the money at last without a thank you. When I told him how much I owed him, he grunted something about "ae guid turn deservin' anither." You would have thought from our leave-taking that we had parted in disgust.

Hislop was a cheery soul, who chattered all the way over the pass and down the sunny vale of Annan. I talked of Galloway markets and sheep prices, and he made up his mind I was a "pack-shepherd" from those parts — whatever that may be. My plaid and my old hat, as I have said, gave me a fine theatrical Scots look. But driving cattle is a mortally slow job, and we took the better part of the day to cover a dozen miles. If I had not had such an anxious heart I would have enjoyed that time. It was shining blue weather, with a constantly changing prospect of brown hills and far green meadows, and a continual sound of larks and curlews and falling streams. But I had no mind for the summer, and little for Hislop's conversation, for as the fateful fifteenth of June drew near I was overweighed with the hopeless difficulties of my enterprise.

I got some dinner in a humble Moffat public-house, and walked the two miles to the junction

on the main line. The night express for the south was not due till near midnight, and to fill up the time I went up on the hillside and fell asleep, for the walk had tired me. I all but slept too long, and had to run to the station and catch the train with two minutes to spare. The feel of the hard third-class cushions and the smell of stale tobacco cheered me up wonderfully. At any rate, I felt now that I was getting to grips with my job.

I was decanted at Crewe in the small hours and had to wait till six to get a train for Birmingham. In the afternoon I got to Reading, and changed into a local train which journeyed into the deeps of Berkshire. Presently I was in a land of lush water-meadows and slow reedy streams. About eight o'clock in the evening, a weary and travel-stained being —a cross between a farm-labourer and a vet — with a checked black-and-white plaid over his arm (for I did not dare to wear it south of the Border) descended at the little station of Artinswell. There were several people on the platform, and I thought I had better wait to ask my way till I was clear of the place.

The road led through a wood of great beeches and then into a shallow valley, with the green backs of downs peeping over the distant trees. After Scotland the air smelt heavy and flat, but infinitely sweet, for the limes and chestnuts and lilac bushes were domes of blossom. Presently I came to a bridge, below which a clear slow stream flowed between snowy beds of water-buttercups. A little above it was a mill; and the lasher made a pleasant cool sound in the scented dusk. Somehow the place soothed me and put me at my ease. I fell to whistling as I looked into the green depths, and the tune which came to my lips was "Annie Laurie."

A fisherman came up from the waterside, and as he neared me he too began to whistle. The tune was infectious, for he followed my suit. He was a huge man in untidy old flannels and a wide-brimmed hat, with a canvas bag slung on his shoulder. He nodded to me, and I thought I had never seen a shrewder or better-tempered face. He leaned his delicate ten-foot split-cane rod against the bridge, and looked with me at the water.

"Clear, isn't it?" he said pleasantly. "I back our Kennet any day against the Test. Look at that big fellow. Four pounds if he's an ounce. But the evening rise is over and you can't tempt 'em."

"I don't see him," said I.

"Look! There! A yard from the reeds just above that stickle."

"I've got him now. You might swear he was a black stone."

"So," he said, and whistled another bar of "Annie Laurie."

"Twisdon's the name, isn't it?" he said over his shoulder, his eyes still fixed on the stream.

"No," I said. "I mean to

say, Yes." I had forgotten all about my *alias*.

"It's a wise conspirator that knows his own name," he observed, grinning broadly at a moor-hen that emerged from the bridge's shadow.

I stood up and looked at him, at the square cleft jaw and broad, lined brow and the firm folds of cheek, and began to think that here at last was an ally worth having. His whimsical blue eyes seemed to go very deep.

Suddenly he frowned. "I call it disgraceful," he said, raising his voice. "Disgraceful that an able-bodied man like you should dare to beg. You can get a meal from my kitchen, but you'll get no money from me."

A dog-cart was passing, driven by a young man who raised his whip to salute the fisherman. When he had gone, he picked up his rod.

"That's my house," he said, pointing to a white gate a hundred yards on. "Wait five minutes and then go round to the back door." And with that he left me.

I did as I was bidden. I found a pretty cottage with a lawn running down to the stream, and a perfect jungle of guelder-rose and lilac flanking the path. The back door stood open, and a grave butler was awaiting me.

"Come this way, sir," he said, and he led me along a passage and up a back staircase to a pleasant bedroom looking towards the river. There I found a complete outfit laid out for me, dress clothes with all the fixings, a brown flannel suit, shirts, collars, ties, shaving things and hair-brushes, even a pair of patent shoes. "Sir Walter thought as how Mr Reggie's things would fit you, sir," said the butler. "He keeps some clothes 'ere, for he comes regular on the week-ends. There's a bath-room next door, and I've prepared a 'ot bath. Dinner in 'alf an hour, sir. You'll 'ear the gong."

The grave being withdrew, and I sat down in a chintz-covered easy-chair and gaped. It was like a pantomime, to come suddenly out of beggardom into this orderly comfort. Obviously Sir Walter believed in me, though why he did I could not guess. I looked at myself in the mirror and saw a wild, haggard brown fellow, with a fortnight's ragged beard, and dust in ears and eyes, collarless, vulgarly shirted, with shapeless old tweed clothes and boots that had not been cleaned for the better part of a month. I made a fine tramp and a fair drover; and here I was ushered by a prim butler into this temple of gracious ease. And the best of it was that they did not even know my name.

I resolved not to puzzle my head but to take the gifts the gods had provided. I shaved and bathed luxuriously, and got into the dress clothes and clean crackling shirt, which fitted me not so badly. By the time I had finished the looking-glass showed a not unpersonable young man.

Sir Walter awaited me in a dusky dining-room where a

little round table was lit with silver candles. The sight of him—so respectable and established and secure, the embodiment of law and government and all the conventions—took me aback and made me feel an interloper. He couldn't know the truth about me, or he wouldn't treat me like this. I simply could not accept his hospitality on false pretences.

"I'm more obliged to you than I can say, but I'm bound to make things clear," I said. "I'm an innocent man, but I'm wanted by the police. I've got to tell you this, and I won't be surprised if you kick me out."

He smiled. "That's all right. Don't let that interfere with your appetite. We can talk about these things after dinner."

I never ate a meal with greater relish, for I had had nothing all day but railway sandwiches. Sir Walter did me proud, for we drank a good champagne and had some uncommon fine port afterwards. It made me almost hysterical to be sitting there, waited on by a footman and a sleek butler, and remember that I had been living for three weeks like a brigand, with every man's hand against me. I told Sir Walter about tiger-fish in the Zambesi that bite off your fingers if you give them a chance, and we discussed sport up and down the globe, for he had hunted a bit in his day.

We went to his study for coffee, a jolly room full of books and trophies and untidiness and comfort. I made up my mind that if ever I got rid of this business and had a house of my own, I would create just such a room. Then when the coffee-cups were cleared away, and we had got our cigars alight, my host swung his long legs over the side of his chair and bade me get started with my yarn.

"I've obeyed Harry's instructions," he said, "and the bribe he offered me was that you would tell me something to wake me up. I'm ready, Mr Hannay."

I noticed with a start that he called me by my proper name.

I began at the very beginning. I told of my boredom in London, and the night I had come back to find Scudder gibbering on my doorstep. I told him all Scudder had told me about Karolides and the Foreign Office conference, and that made him purse his lips and grin. Then I got to the murder, and he grew solemn again. He heard all about the milkman and my time in Galloway, and my deciphering Scudder's notes at the inn.

"You've got them here?" he asked sharply, and drew a long breath when I whipped the little book from my pocket.

I said nothing of the contents. Then I described my meeting with Sir Harry, and the speeches at the hall. At that he laughed uproariously.

"Harry talked dashed nonsense, did he? I quite believe it. He's as good a chap as ever breathed, but his idiot of an uncle has stuffed his

head with maggots. Go on, Mr Hannay."

My day as roadman excited him a bit. He made me describe the two fellows in the car very closely, and seemed to be raking back in his memory. He grew merry again when he heard of the fate of that ass Mark-Brown.

But the old man in the moorland house solemnised him. Again I had to describe every detail of his appearance.

"Bland and bald-headed and hooded his eyes like a bird. . . . He sounds a sinister wild-fowl! And you dynamited his hermitage, after he had saved you from the police. Spirited piece of work, that!"

Presently I reached the end of my wanderings. He got up slowly, and looked down at me from the hearth-rug.

"You may dismiss the police from your mind," he said. "You're in no danger from the law of this land."

"Great Scot!" I cried. "Have they got the murderer?"

"No. But for the last fortnight they have dropped you from the list of possibles."

"Why?" I asked in amazement.

"Principally because I received a letter from Scudder. I knew something of the man, and he did several jobs for me. He was half crank, half genius, but he was wholly honest. The trouble about him was his partiality for playing a lone hand. That made him pretty well useless in any Secret Service —a pity, for he had uncommon gifts. I think he was the bravest man in the world, for he was always shivering with fright, and yet nothing would choke him off. I had a letter from him on the 31st of May."

"But he had been dead a week by then."

"The letter was written and posted on the 23rd. He evidently did not anticipate an immediate decease. His communications usually took a week to reach me, for they were sent under cover to Spain and then to Newcastle. He had a mania, you know, for concealing his tracks."

"What did he say?" I stammered.

"Nothing. Merely that he was in danger, but had found shelter with a good friend, and that I would hear from him before the 15th of June. He gave me no address, but said he was living near Portland Place. I think his object was to clear you if anything happened. When I got it I went to Scotland Yard, went over the details of the inquest, and concluded that you were the friend. We made inquiries about you, Mr Hannay, and found you were respectable. I thought I knew the motives for your disappearance — not only the police, the other one too—and when I got Harry's scrawl I guessed at the rest. I have been expecting you any time this past week."

You can imagine what a load this took off my mind. I felt a free man once more, for I was now up against my country's enemies only, and not my country's law.

"Now let us have the little note-book," said Sir Walter.

It took us a good hour to work through it. I explained the cypher, and he was jolly quick at picking it up. He emended my reading of it on several points, but I had been fairly correct, on the whole. His face was very grave before he had finished, and he sat silent for a while.

"I don't know what to make of it," he said at last. "He is right about one thing —what is going to happen the day after to-morrow. How the devil can it have got known? That is ugly enough in itself. But all this about war and the Black Stone,—it reads like some wild melodrama. If only I had more confidence in Scudder's judgment. The trouble about him was that he was too romantic. He had the artistic temperament, and wanted a story to be better than God meant it to be. He had a lot of odd biases, too. Jews, for example, made him see red. Jews and the high finance.

"The Black Stone," he repeated. "*Der Schwarzestein.* It's like a penny novelette. And all this stuff about Karolides. That is the weak part of the tale, for I happen to know that the virtuous Karolides is likely to outlast us both. There is no State in Europe that wants him gone. Besides, he has just been playing up to Berlin and Vienna and giving my Chief some uneasy moments. No! Scudder has gone off the track there. Frankly, Hannay, I don't believe that part of his story. There's some nasty business afoot, and he found out too much and lost his life over it. But I am ready to take my oath that it is ordinary spy work. A certain great European Power makes a hobby of her spy system, and her methods are not too particular. Since she pays by piece-work her blackguards are not likely to stick at a murder or two. They want our naval dispositions for their collection at the Marinamt; but they will be pigeon-holed—nothing more."

Just then the butler entered the room.

"There's a trunk-call from London, Sir Walter. It's Mr 'Eath, and he wants to speak to you personally."

My host went off to the telephone.

He returned in five minutes with a whitish face. "I apologise to the shade of Scudder," he said. "Karolides was shot dead this evening at a few minutes after seven."

(*To be continued.*)

CORN IN EGYPT.

It was a sharp keen morning in Northern France, and a week's wet had given place to a cutting wind and scudding clouds. Two miles behind the British line it was singularly quiet. The night reliefs were all in their places, and those relieved had dragged their numbed limbs to warmth and shelter and straw beds in billets. A few motor ambulances behind a line of trees waited while the last of the night's toll of wounded were taken aboard, and save for the solemn mutter of the *soixante-quinzes* away to the south there was little immediate sign of war. Now and again a big gun would boom from the German lines, and be answered with a roar from a British 4.7, but that only served to mark the quiet. Those big guns that lie and watch for each other, even as the guns of Metz grey and grim looked on the guns of Verdun grim and grey in the days, now so distant, when no one believed in the possible storm.

The wet still gleamed on the *pavé* of the *Rue Nationale*, and the wind lashed the puddles to wavelets, and the drip still fell from the poplars. A dreary bleak morning, in which the scudding clouds alone savoured of real life. But for all that the wind blew keen, and stirred life in those who were not too weary to respond. An Indian brigade was "in the line." Two battalions in the trenches and in support, two more in reserve, which meant billets in farms and small villages adjacent. Small villages that, wonder of wonders, still lived a civil life in spite of the soldiers billeted in them, and in spite of the frequent happy thought of *Les Boches* to drop merciless shell among the good wives and the *petits bonhommes*. A dozen or so of the light Indian transport carts were filing into the village in the foreground bringing up the day's rations. Just such a sight as might be seen in the Mall at Rawal Pindi or along the fort road at Bannu on a frontier far far from that of France. The two mules in each cart leaning violently inwards towards one another in well-simulated alarm at some imaginary horror by the wayside, a manner of going, apparently, which delighteth the hearts of mules. Atop the load sat the Punjabi driver, a silent, morose soul, *more suo*, with his ears and head swathed in many folds of his untidy puggaree. It was the Indian army mule-cart, as you may see it, from Mandalay to Mooltan, from Calcutta to the Khaiber, and from the Great Wall of China to—to *La Belle* France itself.

The Indian brigade was going to have its rations all right, thanks to phlegmatic driver and boring mule, and

the good *bandobust*[1] of the Army Service Corps. Hungry little French children would share the fragments, for the good folk had fraternised very heartily with the dusky friends from Hindostan, and the *entente* was very *cordiale*. At the edge of the village lolled an Indian soldier, hungry and rather bored. Hungry because he was so, even after eating his morning's meal, and not because of its failure. Hungry because he was a great hulking Afridi lad, who could eat his mother out of house and home any day, and infinitely more so after a night's inlying piquet-duty in Northern France. However, he had his morning *chapattis* and some cold *dhal*,[2] a can of tea, and some army biscuits, so he had no right to complain, and knew it. The day, however, had to be got through, and it would be some hours before he could look for another meal. It was nevertheless a good world, of that Khudadad Khan of the Khambar Khel clan of the Afridi felt assured, for several reasons. First, and foremost, because of the fact which even this strange war had not effaced from its freshness, he had prosecuted his blood-feud with success in his recent furlough from which he had returned to mobilise. He had potted his adversary while the latter was sitting in the sun outside his own mud tower. The which had come about all along of listening to gossip which had said that all furlough in India had been closed, enjoying therefrom a false security. Secondly, the only male who could pursue the feud was also a soldier of the English, and, praise be to God, had been blown up with the Baluchis in a trench the week before. Thirdly, he had twenty-five pieces of gold sewn up in his belt—lawful spoil of dead Germans. Then also he was a crack shot, and as such achieved much *kudos* as a sharpshooter, having picked off so many of the opposite gentry of similar kidney that he had given up account, and could give himself airs accordingly. One more good thought. Two German rifles with two hundred rounds of ammunition wrapped in well-oiled rags were buried, he alone knew where, to be reclaimed, it might be, later on, and smuggled back to India. In fact there was hardly a trait of character or hobby that had not been gratified. Therefore it was not to be wondered at that Khudadad had tied his puggaree jauntily, nay, almost offensively, and was casting about to kill time in a genial mood, despite the matter of an appetite that was not fully assuaged.

Up the village street marched three small boys, two in *kepis* and one in a khaki cap. One had a haversack and one had a water-bottle, and the third a leather belt with, joy of joys, a French bayonet, the immortal *Rosalie*, hanging therefrom.

"*Attention!*" called the

[1] A Persian word = arrangement.

[2] = pulse.

fugleman as they passed the Afridi, and Khudadad returned the salute as he had seen his British officers do. The boys stopped. "*Bonjour, Monsieur le soldat.*"

"*Shtaramashe,*"[1] began the Afridi, the first of the series of courteous greetings that obtain on the Afghan border. The boys clustered round and begged to see his rifle. Khudadad spent a pleasant fifteen minutes with the boys, and then was bored. So he strolled on, out on to the *pavé*, and watched a French peasant cut a water-channel with a long thin spade with a long handle. He liked that—it was just what they would be doing in the Bara valley now, only being a Pathan he felt sure he could use the spade better. Passing a cottage a girl was singing about *Le bon Roi Dagobert* to a small baby. The Indian soldiers are very good friends with the French peasantry, and again it was *Bonjour, Monsieur le soldat.* But Afridis are not good at chatting to young women, and Khudadad passed by with a grin and an awkward salaam, and then thought it would amuse him to turn up a bit towards the trenches and follow the long line of poplars which trended that way. Half a mile or so on he came to a communicating piquet who were cooking a meal by turns. They were from a Sikh regiment, a people with whom Afridis have little sympathy. The compliment, by the way, is returned. He turned aside to have nothing to do with such gentry and lounged on, rifle slung over one shoulder, hands in pockets like an Englishman.

At a cross-roads stood a lonely crucifix. Below it two graves of French territorials, *Morts pour la patrie.* Graves did not affect Khudadad much, there were plenty in his country by lonely wayside places, where travellers had been raided or blood-feuds scored. The strange figure arrested his attention that hung from the wooden cross. He looked in the face of the image, and then some impulse seized him, and he salaamed to the figure of the Man of Sorrows and gave to the graves the proper Muhammadan greeting, "Peace be with you people of the tomb." Then, turning back, he loafed away from the roadway back towards the piquet hut.

The peace of the morning was passing, and the mutter of the *soixante-quinzes* was drowned in the sound of our own 18-pounders beating the *point du jour.* The big guns occasionally roared an answer, and a shell would fall with a coughing roar behind the hut. Khudadad wondered if the Sikhs would be put off their breakfast, . . . and a happy thought struck him. Moving towards the cottage he had paused in a field of sugar-beet, and stooped to fill his arms and his pockets with the roots. Moving on again he came to a hedge and a bit of ditch facing the door. In this the Afridi took cover, laying the beets in

[1] =may you never be tired.

a pile by his side. For full ten minutes he lay listening to the chatter of the Sikhs in Gurmukhi, and heard the slow-drawled Punjabi, "*Aun . . da*" and "*ja . . ala,*" and smelt the good smell of *moong dhal* and rice simmering in the soldiers' pots.

Then there came a shell whistling and screaming, to burst with a crash a hundred yards behind the cottage. Close on the shell-burst Khudadad hurled a handful of beet-roots at the door. A moment's silence and then out tumbled the occupants, to see nothing but the smoke and dust of the shell-burst drifting away on the breeze.

"*Aré bhai!* Brother, 'tis but fancy," and the four cookers returned to their meal.

Khudadad, the trained hunter, waited patiently. A fisher of fish a fisher of men, he who would catch the hare as it sits, or continue the blood-feud in safety, must needs have patience. That gift was his of inheritance. Now "Khudadad" is the exact equivalent of "Theodore," "the gift of God," the mother's pride. "The gift of God" sat and waited, in the hope that the friendly shell was not a single one.

The artillery of W. Hohenzollern did not fail him. Once again a projectile hummed and crashed into the unploughed stubble beyond the cottage. Once again Khudadad bombarded the cottage door, to heighten the effect, with sugar-beet and stones. It was too much for the soldiery within. Bursting shell so near that sods and stones and splinters rattled against their shelter door was more than the elect could stand. The four Sikhs, forgetful of their meal and their appetite, doubled away in the direction of the poplar road that led to safety.

Then, since the Lord helps them that help themselves, and everything comes to him who waits, Sepoy Khudadad Khan sat down to the Government ration of four well-grown Sikhs, nicely cooked to a turn, and felt the better therefor, like the broth of a boy that he was, humming to himself that old refrain of the Sepoy army—

"Sometimes pleasure, sometimes pain,
The servant of the English."

G. F. MacMunn.

THROUGH SIBERIA IN TIME OF WAR.

WRAPPED in furs and voluminous rugs as a protection against the icy winds and freezing cold of the dawn of a Manchurian winter's day, and provided with a British passport, signed by the Russian Consul at Mukden, wherein one was duly described and set forth, and all whom it might concern called upon to give assistance and protection, I left the ancient city of Liaoyang at 6 o'clock on 11th March to return to England, having heard that the Trans-Siberian route, closed at the outbreak of war, was again open and a weekly Express running. The long half-hour's drive in an open Russian drozhki to the Japanese station at Liaoyang, in the teeth of an icy blast from the north, and with a thermometer 39 degrees below zero, made us shiver in spite of furs, and feel grateful for the shelter of the warm carriages on the Manchurian Express. As the train pulled out of the station, and the old grey walls of the city receded farther and farther away, the "Bai-ta," the great white Buddhist Tower, which has kept watch and ward for centuries over Liaoyang, towering high above its walls, stood out clear and distinct against the morning sky, and only after we had left the town many a mile behind did it fade into the dim distance. After a long run through Manchuria of eleven hours, we reached Kwan-Chêng-Tzu, or Chang-Chun, as the Japanese call it. Here the white-gloved, polite car attendant brushed and dusted us carefully, before we were allowed to descend from the train, for the Japanese railway officials always deliver up their passengers spick and span, and bow them politely out of their keeping. And the bowing process requires time, for no polite Japanese would allow his bow to be of shorter duration than his friend's. At Chang-Chun we stayed over night, and next morning at seven A.M. left by the Russian Express, which runs on Fridays to Harbin to join the Siberian Express. This part of the journey takes about nine hours, and we ran into Harbin Station at 4.30 P.M. It was snowing heavily when we arrived, and so slippery with frost were the great wooden platforms, it was with difficulty one could keep one's feet. The platform and tea-rooms were crowded with Russians. Most of the men were in uniform, and we learned to our dismay that the Siberian Express had that week been commandeered for Russian officers and their wives going through to Petrograd. The railway official refused to give us tickets. "We have travelled two whole days to get this train," we pleaded; "how can we sit a whole week in Harbin waiting for the next train, and

in a snowstorm too?" But the Russian only shook his head. He would see, he said, and if there were two vacant berths we should have them. Looking at the crowded platform, our spirits sank to zero. Many of the officers' wives were going with their husbands to Petrograd, to be within easy reach of news from the front. Others had come to see husbands and sons off, and these stood apart in little groups, smiling bravely into each other's faces to the last through their tears. Presently the Express, a huge, white frozen thing, with snow-laden roofs and hanging icicles, came slowly in from Vladivostock, and then all was confusion and bustle for some time. Our hopes and fears as to getting a place in the train rose and fell alternately. At last, to our great relief, it was found that there were two vacant places. They were rather crowded quarters, and as the Russians seem to delight to travel surrounded by luxuries and innumerable packages, and were already in possession, there did not seem to be an inch of space left for us and our modest belongings. Boxes of fruit and sweets and cakes, and bouquets of lovely hothouse flowers, were everywhere, the latter contrasting strangely with the snow-blizzard raging outside. We took our places cheerfully, thankful not to be left behind; and the train moved off on its long journey across Siberia.

One advantage we discovered in having the train commandeered was that we ran straight through to Petrograd without having to change at Manchuria and Irkutzk, as one has to do ordinarily. My *coupé* companions were two Russian officers' wives and an angel-faced child of four or five called "Lonski." Neither of the ladies knew a word of English, and I knew no Russian, so our conversations were carried on in French and German. Only one of all the ladies in the corridor knew a little English, and when she found I was English she said, "That is very nice. You are one ally." The officers for the most part spoke English fairly well, and the most friendly feeling for the English was evinced by all the Russians in the train. I found them refined and courteous, and, as the only Englishwoman on the train, I was the recipient from the ladies of many kindnesses. We had in our corridor, besides a crowd of Russian ladies, five children —all boys—and two dogs, so our days were by no means dull. The angel-faced child in my *coupé* was fertile in mischief. He amused himself one morning early by sticking pins into the cane-seats along the corridor, so that if one pulled down a seat one sat on the points. When I descended from my lofty berth, the poor mother was pulling out the pins and apologising profusely to those outraged passengers who had risen like the early worm and been caught. Lonski received punishment, and retired to a corner, where he sat with an expression of heavenly

sweetness on his baby face, waving his hands and saying, "Ne Natha, Ne Natha" (I do not want you), when any one approached him. War was, of course, chief topic of conversation, and during the journey one heard many opinions given as to the probable duration of the conflict. A cheerful optimism seemed to be the prevailing tone, but most faces looked sad, and one could feel that the Russians are taking the war seriously, more so than we in Britain seem to be doing. There was no expressed hatred against the Germans, but there was only one opinion as to the righteousness of the war on the part of the Allies. We were told that a new Russian army of five millions was nearly ready for the field, and "we shall put on twice that number if necessary," said our informant. But the difficulties in the way of transport in a country like Russia must be enormous.

From the corridor windows, as we journeyed on, day after day, we watched the vast lifeless snow-plains of Siberia glide past, dazzling in the brilliant sunshine.

Desolate levels of frozen silence, through which the train found its way, the monotony only broken now and then by spreading forests of fir and pine. Except in its all-too-brief summer-time, a pitiless country, where men learn to endure. At the occasional stopping-places on the way, the wood vans for the engine were replenished. Huge swinging crates containing chunks of wood were brought to the platform by ant-like strings of coolies, and emptied rapidly into the vans. At all the stations the most delicious bread and butter, and milk in sealed bottles, can be bought, as well as other Russian eatables. Owing to the crowded state of the train it was not always easy to get places in the restaurant car, and numbers of the passengers went out and foraged for themselves at the stations. But the Siberian Express has a way of starting off from stations without the slightest warning, or the slightest regard for its passengers, so one has to keep a watchful eye on it, not to get left behind, as I believe often happens. At stations every one alights to get air and exercise.

Hearing a passenger speak of the "tastiness" of the Russian meat-doughnuts at the stations, we determined to "taste and try" for ourselves, and at the next stopping-place, which fortunately came close to the luncheon hour, we got down and made for the restaurant. We had to point to what we wanted, and had no sooner got them served out piping hot than a friendly shout of "Run, the train is going," came, and we fled across the slippery platform, hands full, and had to finish our *al-fresco* lunch on the rear platform. But the doughnuts were delicious and most satisfying. At Irkutzk a heavy snowstorm had taken place, and we ran in between banks of feathery snow, six feet high, to

the station. Bands of workmen were busily engaged in clearing the line. During the winter the thermometer had registered 59° below zero, an unprecedented temperature even for Irkutzk. We passed that magnificent Queen of Lakes, Lake Baikal, which is four hundred miles long, in the early morning, before it was light, and had no chance of seeing it. When, a couple of days later, we arrived at Ormzk, strains of music and sounds of cheering greeted us, and hastily donning furs and rubbers we got down to find a battalion of Cossacks being entrained for the front at a neighbouring platform. They were all dressed in sheepskin coats, high fur hats, fur leggings, &c., and were splendid, big, fighting men, every one of them. They were in the highest spirits, singing lustily, and shouting farewells as their train moved off in front of ours. A wounded Russian officer, with his arm in a sling, joined our train here, and was an object of interest to us all. He was very cheerful, his only anxiety being to get well quickly, that he might rejoin his regiment. There are no slackers in Russia. They hold themselves, each man, in readiness to give all they have of energy and zeal to defend their country. As we drew nearer with every mile of progress to the more varied and grander scenery of the Ural Mountains, we looked down on deep ravines and frozen rivers, spanned by numerous bridges. For fear of spies attempting to drop bombs from the train and destroy the bridges, soldiers stand along the corridors and at the doors while the train crosses a bridge, and no one is allowed to look out. As we neared the frontier we stopped more frequently at large towns, with flat-roofed, square wooden buildings, painted in colours, and immense wood-yards. At these stations beautiful aquamarine and other precious stones found in the Urals are on sale.

A large upright slab marks the frontier between Siberia and Russia, having "Siberia" on the one side and "Russia" on the other. On the Saturday afternoon, eight days after we had left Harbin, we ran into the station at Petrograd, to find ourselves surrounded on all sides by the evidences of war. Long Red Cross trains were standing ready for the front, with doctors and nurses; and to judge from the crowds and the many sorrowful faces, a troop train was also about to leave. One of the Russian ladies who had been travelling with us was met with the sorrowful news that her husband had fallen at the front, and she seemed stunned with grief. We saw all the mingled glory and terror of war. Uniforms were everywhere; but the dress of the women had a sombre note, though many of the ladies wore magnificent furs.

After brisk bargaining with the drozhki driver—in much the same manner as one would bargain in India with a gharry-

wallah — we got our luggage conveyed to the waiting drozhki, and were ourselves wrapped to the eyes in heavy fur robes—for the cold was intense—and conveyed swiftly to the Hôtel de l'Europe. We had been told not to speak German in Petrograd, as so strong was the feeling of "the man in the street" about the war that at the first "Ja" or "Nein" even our drozhki driver might turn us out. The Hôtel de l'Europe is in Michaelovskaya Street, on the north side of the famous Nevski Prospect, which is to Petrograd what Regent Street or Piccadilly is to London, and is the pride of every Russian. English is spoken at this hotel, and it is centrally situated between the station at which we arrived and the Finnish station from which we had to leave next day. Presenting our passports — which it is absolutely necessary to have in any Russian hotel — to be viséd by the police, we were accommodated with rooms, and I was given in charge to a small red "tiger" in buttons, who hailed me as "No. 106, pozhalzt" (please), and preceded me to my room, where he brought me police papers to sign. We were warned at the Bureau that we should not be allowed to take gold out of Russia, and were advised to get it exchanged in Petrograd, as we should get a better exchange than at the frontier. And even of roubles we must not carry more than five hundred.

The streets in Petrograd, in spite of the falling snow, were crowded with people, and almost every nationality seemed to be represented. Regiments of fierce-looking Cossacks and smartly - uniformed officers marched past, and an endless stream of luxurious automobiles, drozhkis, and sleighs with tinkling bells glided along. One was impressed by the size and magnificence of the buildings, and the broad and finely laid out streets and squares. An imperial city, even in its mantle of snow and under the gloom and stress of war.

Early next morning we turned our backs on Petrograd, driving in open sleighs through the city to the Finnish station on the north of the Neva, three miles from the hotel. Here we had first of all to satisfy the customs; then we were permitted to take our seats, and turned our faces northward through Finland—in Finnish "Suomi," the Land of a Thousand Lakes. The railway line runs near the coast of the Gulf of Finland, and the scenery is beautiful. There are woods of fir and pine, and pretty quaint-looking houses peeping through. It is a favourite summer resort with the Russians. We admired the beauties of this new land for a little, and then awoke to the fact that we were desperately hungry, and little wonder, for we had sleighed in the cold and frosty air of early morning, for an hour, breakfastless—for it had been impossible to get even a cup of coffee at our early departure from the hotel. So we went along and besieged the restaurant car, clamouring

in our best French for food. The waiter looked bewildered. Then we tried our best German, and all the Russian we had picked up, and at last he knew. "Ach!" he said; "but there is no breakfast prepared till after nine o'clock, at which time we are examined by the customs at Bielo-ostroff." "Could we not get something meantime?" we asked. He shook his head. We said we felt this to be extremely inhospitable to strangers in a strange land; but he was not impressed, and we retired with dignity.

At Bielo-ostroff — the last Russian station on the frontier —we were all turned out of the train, our luggage and passports collected, and we ourselves conducted to a long room, and provided with seats at a table and given papers to fill up for the police. Here I found I was the only woman travelling, and there were forty or fifty men.

After the papers were filled up we were called out one by one and questioned by a military officer in an inner room. When I appeared before him, "Madam," he said in a mighty solemnity, addressing me in French, "why are you travelling in Russia?" I explained. "You are not a spy?" "No," I said with dignity; "I am an honest British subject." "Have you any spy papers or plans?" he asked, and without waiting for a reply he seized my handbag and emptied its contents on to the table. Among letters and odd papers I had a postcard, received in Manchuria, saying a friend would probably be travelling by the same train to England. The officer pounced on this. Here was a find. "Why were you to meet this friend in Russia? Who is he?" he asked with added severity. I explained as best I could. "Is he a spy?" he demanded, and paused expectantly.

"He is in there," I replied, pointing to the door behind the guard; "and he is of age, you can ask him." "We shall keep this card and make inquiries," he said. I bowed. He then continued examining all my letters and papers, and seemed particularly interested in the Chinese stamps on several of them. Looking up with a smile, he said, "May I take a stamp or two?" "Bitte, nehmen Sie," I said in German without thinking. "Oh!" he said instantly, with a return to his stern manner, "you speak German? But you *are* British?" "I do speak a little German, but I am British, and I am no spy," I said. "That will do;" and addressing the guard he said, "Let the lady go back to the train and call the next man." The guard opened the door and conducted me to the platform; a porter brought my luggage, which had also been examined; and my passport was signed and given back to me. After a long and patient wait, while the men were being questioned, we were all passed and permitted to return to the train and breakfast. The Finnish railway service is excellent, and we found ourselves

well looked after, being supplied with fresh linen every night without extra charge. Our first stop in Finland was at Terijoki, the usual customs station for passengers leaving Russia; but here we were left in peace. At Viburg, the next stopping-place, the restaurant car was taken off, and for the rest of the journey through Finland meals were supplied at the stations, the train waiting from fifteen to twenty minutes. At these station buffets long centre tables were covered with all kinds of cooked food, tea, coffee, and jugs of delicious milk. Little tables were placed round the room and seats, and one helped oneself to whatever one wished, and paid the one charge to the attendant. The waiting girls in the national costume looked very pretty and picturesque. As we travelled on from Viburg to Tamerfors—the Manchester of Finland—through most beautiful lake scenery, those of us to whom Finland was a new and undiscovered country were held fascinated by its charm. No more picturesque and charming lake and woodland scenery could be found anywhere. From Tamerfors we proceeded by Keuru and Seinajoki, following the coastline of the Gulf of Bothnia to Uleaburg and Torneo, sometimes passing through rich forests of pine and fir and birch, at other times running by wide and beautiful lakes. What we saw of the Finnish people we liked. Several Finnish ladies travelled with us one day. They wore ordinary English dress, and were most pleasant and friendly. The porters at the stations looked big and strong and sunburnt, and wore flat caps with "Kalaka" (porter) written on them.

On the morning of the third day after leaving Petrograd—a glorious morning of blue sky and exhilarating sunshine—we reached Torneo, and here all passengers, except those going on to Sweden or England, left the train. A temporary line has been laid to Karunki, half an hour's run farther on, to enable passengers to reach the Swedish-Norwegian railway easily. At Karunki a more rigid examination of ourselves and our luggage than any we had yet undergone took place. The train was put under guard, and we were taken, a carriageful at a time, to the customs and military offices. Each one was personally searched. Again I was the only woman on the train, and came in for special attention, as they said the worst spies were often found to be women.

Despite my honest British appearance, I was had up again and again before the military police, and questioned by a man with a fierce moustache and a nervous manner. They were specially vigilant, as a spy had lately slipped through their fingers. At length the ordeal was over, and we packed ourselves and our belongings into two-seated sleighs, and the great gates were swung open for us to pass through. As each sleigh came up, the names were called out,

and our passports were handed to us. Then followed a sort of wild race across the frozen river Torneo, each driver trying his best to whip up his steed and outdo the others, running the risk of upsetting his passengers at every turning.

The race lasted twenty minutes or so, and the swift flight in air that was like wine, and glorious sunshine, made the blood dance in one's veins, and we were all laughing when we arrived at the gates of the Swedish frontier Karungi. Here we had to dismount and again undergo a strict examination on behalf of the Swedish Government. At this frontier a doctor also saw us and pronounced us fit and well, and we were permitted to pass into Sweden.

Entering our sleighs again, we continued our exciting race for another ten minutes, till we reached the small temporary railway station where we were to get the train for Stockholm. It was about noon when we arrived at this station, and the Stockholm Express did not leave till eight-thirty in the evening. What were we to do with ourselves for all these long hours, sitting on the edge of a frozen plain? Numbers of Lapland and Finnish peasant lads gathered to look at us and see what was going on, and several soldiers, in high, white sheepskin hats, tramped out and in incessantly. The Laplanders have quite a distinctive appearance, having round chubby faces, very short from brow to chin. They, too, wore high white caps and undressed leather boots reaching to the knee.

Temporary wooden buildings have been erected to meet the requirements of passengers sent this way during the war, and we were able to have luncheon, which was daintily served. There is also a temporary bank, where one can change roubles into Swedish coinage. Towards evening a group of women and children were brought into the waiting-room, and at the sound of their Teutonic voices every one turned and stared. A man near us volunteered the information that they were German families who had been living in the north of Finland. The men had been recalled, and the women and children were being sent to Germany. They chatted cheerfully of what they would do when they reached the "Vaterland," but the children seemed unhappy, and one biggish boy furtively wiped away tears now and then. They were put by themselves in front of the train, in a through carriage, and must have had a pretty hard time during the two or three nights before we reached Stockholm, as they had no sleeping accommodation whatever.

From Karungi to Stockholm, by Boden, the journey was very comfortable and uneventful. The Swedish passengers who travelled occasionally with us were friendly, and quite willing to discuss the war in all its features. There was some grumbling among them at the stoppage of their wood trade, but they admitted that Britain was right in going into war.

At Stockholm we arrived in the early morning, and submitted to the usual customs examination, though what they expected to find after the exhaustive searchings at the last two frontiers I do not know. After breakfasting in one of the hotels, we spent the day seeing this most beautiful and picturesque city, built at the meeting of the waters. In the summer-time small white steamers ply on the rivers between the different parts of the town.

We were admitted into the palace, and saw some of the wonderful old sixteenth-century tapestry. At the Skansen, a fine park with a zoo, and some quaint old-world cottages, we climbed the tower and had a glorious view of the whole city and its surroundings. It was quite worth the fatigue of climbing, but what I did not like was that each of us paid 25 ora to go up by electric lift, and then found the lift was out of order, and we had to toil up after all!

At night we left Stockholm in the Norwegian Express, and arrived at Kristiania, the quaint little Norwegian capital, early next day. Here, too, we spent a long and happy day wandering through the town, seeing all we could. We went by electric car up the Holmenkollen, a height from which a most magnificent view of the surrounding fjords and hills can be seen. Numbers of men and girls were ski-ing on the snowy slopes of the hill.

We left Kristiania by the Bergen Express that same evening, reaching Bergen next forenoon. This is also a quaint little old town, with narrow streets and busy quays, and snowy heights overlooking the town.

We visited the Consul to get our passports signed, and had a long search to find him in the narrow streets. Then, hearing that a Norwegian steamer was leaving at noon for Newcastle-on-Tyne, we went to the shipping offices on the quay, where a description was taken of each one, and names and addresses of friends, in case anything untoward befell us on the North Sea.

With some trepidation we went on board, feeling at the same time a sort of fearful hope that we might see a submarine, or even be chased by one, and be able to boast of it all our lives after. But no submarine appeared, and soon the tossing of the light unballasted boat rendered us so unhappy that even a torpedo would have found us indifferent!

When we came in sight of land we were not allowed to appear on deck until we were moored in dock at Newcastle. After the many foreign tongues with which we had been struggling these many days, it was strange to hear nothing but English around us.

Here, too, the man in khaki was everywhere, and the sound of martial music and the tramp of marching feet mingled with the chimes of the church bells, for we had reached England on a Sunday morning.

ELLA R. GRAHAM.

SEA MONSTER CATCHING.

BY HORACE G. HUTCHINSON.

"His angle-rod made of a sturdy oak,
His line a cable, which in storms ne'er broke;
His hook he baited with a dragon's tail,
And sate upon a rock, and bobbed for whale."

We will come to all that directly, but it is as well to be introduced to such big things by gradual steps; and, first of all, seeing that this is a personal record, I will speak of my earliest initiation, by more humble ways, into the joys of sea-fishing. It was in classic waters that my first lessons were learnt, for the scene was that pleasant river Torridge, flowing up to Bideford town, which Charles Kingsley and Amyas Leigh between them have made famous. And at once the captious critic is to be heard posing an objection that fishing in a river is not sea-fishing—an objection only to be countered by the direct negative, and by the assertion that, understood in the reasonable man's sense, this was indeed sea-fishing, for it was sea-fish that were the quarry and the water was tidal and strongly on the salt side of brackish. There, on a point called Rock's Nose, just below Burrough House itself, where Mrs Leigh lived with her sons, we used to sit, and at certain states of the tide would catch beautiful silvery little bass running up. The bait was the common or garden worm, the style of angling was of little skill or subtlety, but those were boyhood's days, when all toffee is sweet and all in the way of sport is glorious.

Next I will ask you to come down with me along the coast of that Torridge estuary, and turning sharp south-westward, as soon as you are free of the river, see where the great waves are pounding thunderously on the rounded stones of the Pebble-Ridge. There, in the surf of the billows, following the "brit," on the top of the tide, would come in far bigger bass than any we might catch by dangling the worm off Rock's Nose point. This gave work of a more scientific kind; it was work, too, for something more than a small boy, for the way to catch these bass which rolled in the big breakers was to wade out as far as you could or dared among the waves, then to fling out, off a spinning reel, a Devon minnow, and, as you wound it in, it was hard luck if you did not now and then catch a bass, a splendid fish, that would give you as good a fight as any species other than trout or salmon can put up.

You must come with me a

little farther westward now, to where once upon a time a pier ran out into the ocean opposite the modern watering-place of Westward Ho! The gods of the sea, for their own inscrutable reasons, did not choose that Westward Ho! should enjoy the pier for long. They sent up special messengers in form of great waves to wash it down and away, and it is no longer in being. But while it was there, though it was only on days of a calm such as is unusual on that storm-vexed coast that it could be approached by boats or pleasure-steamers, it provided a grand perch for sea-fishing. The mode there was to fling out a baited hand-line, by means of a plumb of lead attached to the line's end, as far as you could heave it seaward. There you left it, until a tug communicated to you the ecstatic news that there was a fish at its farther end; it might be codling or pollock or conger, or at worst a shark-like dog-fish. This was a sport that had in it some of the attractive element of danger, for if one did not stand very well clear while another was whirling the end preparatory to casting it out, there was every likelihood of being brained by the circling "plumb." After nightfall, at a certain stage of the tide, was the best moment for this angling, for then, as it seemed, the fish would be out on their lawful occasions and be prowling and feeding around the rocks.

The quarry, you will note, are steadily growing bigger, as the story grows. These pollock and congers that we caught off this pier were of no account at all in comparison with some that we shall be taking in a page or two, but in the meantime they gave good sport enough. About the age at which I was still really a boy — though I did not then deem myself one any longer, for I was already an undergraduate—I went yachting, with some good friends, up the Scottish West Coast. It was a very glorious life, for it was a twenty-ton yacht, and that is the ideal size for the undergraduate. It meant a boat large enough to be a home and to give you a comfortable berth, small enough for you to make-believe that you were doing a great deal of the work of the ropes and so on for yourself, yet large enough to carry a sufficient professional crew to do all that work for you if it came to a real pinch too tight for the amateur. And if the boat was ideal, so too, for sailing in a small craft of its kind, was the locality — that West Coast, with its lochs and islands in which we made our Odyssey. And here and there, and on all possible occasions, we fished. I will say nothing of those lovely whiting which we took in Loch Hourn, letting down a "paternoster" to the silver sand which forms that fair loch's floor, nor again of those sea-trout or finnocks, on which we made poaching raids in small streams of remote islands and coasts. The little sea-trout

would go up the estuaries of these burns, with the tide, and running a net across the burn near the mouth and then making a vast commotion in the water above, so as to scare the fish back towards the sea again, we used to catch a number of them which made most admirable eating.

But of the "smaller fry" I do not wish to say more than this, because we were nearing ground (or water) where we hoped for, and achieved, far greater things. We had been told indeed in Oban (perhaps by one who took subtle Scottish advantage of our Sassenach innocence) that there lurked in Loch Torridon, that big sea loch which the chart showed us lying far to the north, lythe (which is the northern name for pollock) of such a size that the way of fishing for them was as follows: when one was hooked, the fisher first let the fish run out all the line. Previously he had taken the precaution of tying his rod, by a piece of cord, to one of the spare oars, and when the line was exhausted, then the fisherman threw first the rod into the water, then the oar after the rod, and proceeded to row leisurely behind the whole complicated arrangement until the fish grew tired and he might retrieve first the oar, then the rod, next might wind in the line, and finally, if Fortune were in a really favouring mood, might find the fish still fast, and tow it up to be gaffed into the boat. That was the story of the Scot of Oban and of the lythe of Torridon, and we gleefully promised ourselves a visit to that loch and a great encounter with its great fish when we got there. We never in point of fact arrived so far, but in the meantime we had sport of the finest kind imaginable with the lythe in other waters on the way up. How big some of the fish may have been that we did, for a minute or two, become attached to, we were never able to know, for in spite of the stoutness of our tackle they broke us, and carried off with them our best "Hearder's" spinning baits and gimp trappings. This happened in and about those Shiant Islands that lie out in the Minch. I believe "shiant" to be only a way of saying "giant," and whether they are named in compliment to the fish that live about them I do not know, but they are well-named islands if it be so. The biggest fish we caught there was about 15 lb., but he was an infant (or so we always assured ourselves) in comparison with some of those that we lost. It was there that a maxim-monger coined his now famous dictum: "There are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it, but there are none as good as some that have been hooked and lost." It is a small saying which holds a great truth.

Please observe that we did not fish for these lythe with the mere hand-lines: we were more artistic and sportsman-

like than that. We had stiff, two-jointed rods of greenheart, with whalebone terminations to the top joints. Thus they were very strong, and pliant therewith. And you needed strength, for we used to fish for the lythe in some tideway that ran stiff over rocks below, pulling the boat to and fro across it. When a lythe of ten pounds or so took you in this strong current, he would make the rod bend like a bow and quiver as he ran out the line, always making for the weed-bed at the bottom. From going too successfully to that dense covert, where he would warp the line and the cast around the great fronds of the seaweed, we had to fight, holding him up with as much strain as ever we dared put on the rod. For a minute or two he gave all the joyful thrill and glorious uncertainty of a salmon; but he had not the hardy heart of that king of fish to keep the fight going, and if he did not get to his weedy haven in the first or second rush he was sure to submit and come quietly to the gaff. A lythe from these southern waters, cooked absolutely fresh, is fine eating.

If ever you have yachted on that West Coast, which is the very paradise of yachtsmen, you will scarcely fail to have put into Arran, going between the main island and the Holy Island adjacent to it on the eastward side. There we used often to lay down a long line, in the passage between the north point of Holy Island and Arran itself—a line of a hundred or more yards, with a lead sinker at each end to keep it moored, also a bladder attached at either end to show its place when we wanted to retrieve it; and all along the line, at brief intervals apart, depended short lines each carrying a baited hook. After leaving this down awhile we would come back to gather it in-board again, and often enough the bag was disappointing. Many of the baits would have been sucked off by star-fish, and we would have little reward for our toil. But there came one wonderful day which made amends for all. There had been a great gale outside; big strands of "monkey-tail" seaweed had been tossed up on the beach, rent from the roots on the sea's floor. We had been grateful to lie snug in the nearly land-locked harbourage. No doubt some of the creatures of the sea's depth would have wished to lie more snug than they did when the weeds among which they lived were being tugged up. Something, certainly, must have happened to move them, for when we pulled up our long line on the first day after that storm on which the sea became calm enough to let us put it out, we hauled up monsters. There were congers of six foot, saithe (which the Southerner calls coal-fish) hardly of less length, and a few very large lythe besides. We went into Lamlash like heroes in triumph from a

victory. Some of the larger spoils, such as congers—which the Scottish folk will not readily eat—were hung up on a line raised on posts on the green that goes between the houses of the little town and the sea. They were not quite a nine days' wonder, for by the third day's end they made appeal to other senses besides that of sight, and sanitary motives suggested their removal; but while they hung there they were objects of interest and admiration, and we, who had captured them, were very big people in the eyes of the admiring and envious youth of Lamlash.

Certainly it is not to be claimed that there is much of the supreme and delicate art of the highest angling about this business of letting down a long line and then pulling it up in order to see what may have attached itself thereto while it rested in the depths. Some art there is, in the first place, in coiling, and secondly, in uncoiling, as you pay it out, the baited line, so that its many hooks shall not entangle the whole into inextricable cat's cradles: but it is rather a different art. If it is sport that you are looking for, and even sport with that element of danger associated with it which we always regard as indispensable to the keenest sporting joy, then you may get that, as you pull or gaff the big congers in-board, no matter by what manner of angling device you have affixed the hook into their jaws. There was a story of a legendary hero who used to be guest on that very yacht—legendary in the sense that he, being a very real person and a man of profound learning therewith, had the faculty, like the heroes of old time, of attracting to himself a diversity of myths. It was told of him that, the yacht being in harbour, he let down a baited line out of his porthole, and while he lay on his berth immersed in some learned treatise, was distracted from its contemplation by a frantic tugging on the line. Pulling it up, he at length drew in through the porthole a medium-sized and very vivacious conger, which disported its coils all over and about him to his immense discomfiture, until his cries for help at length summoned to him the assistance of the crew, who beheld the learned professor combating with the water-serpent, rather as the infant Hercules is seen in classic sculpture struggling with the python that has assaulted him in his cradle. But of course this conger, that a man might thus pull in through a porthole, was itself but an infant in comparison with some of those which we captured off Arran on our long line, and a still smaller babe relatively to some that we drew from their Atlantic depths farther to the south and west. But theirs is another story, at which we are just arriving.

It is a delicate and insidious matter to claim for one portion of our islands an exact superi-

ority over others in the size or quality of the fish that they may furnish for our sport. I know it well—especially how jealous in this respect is the Scot for the reputation of his native shores. What of monsters there may be in the depths of the sea, no man precisely knows; but as for what has happened to me, angling in many waters, to draw up out of such depths as my angle has been able to search, I have seen none to compare with the fish taken from a certain bank that lies out in the Atlantic, west of the westernmost island of the Scilly group. If you should be yachting in that region I should not by any means counsel you to wait for bringing out your fishing gear until you have gone that far towards the setting sun. Only halfway between the Land's End and the Scillies themselves there lies a group of rocks known as the Seven Stones, over which the water goes shallow. These rocks are a splendid lair for pollock—"pollock" is now the name that we shall give to the same fish which we have lately been catching by the name of lythe in Scotland. They are brothers and sisters to the fabled monsters of Loch Torridon and of the actual giants of the Shiant (or Giant) Islands. And they are gigantic enough. We did not fish for them there with any delicate refinements such as those rods of green-heart and whalebone. We went out, from two yachts, to the number of seven or so small rowing-boats—as it were, one for each of the "stones," — and with hand-lines and "Hearder's spinners," and hauled in the big brown-backed pollock till our fingers were chafed and our very backs stiff with the hauling,—hauled them in with strong hand-lines and a sheer "pull-baker, pull-devil" tug, until the boats were half full of the creatures. It was sport so over-bountiful in its quantity that the zest for it tired, even as the muscles tired; but for all that it was fine fun at the time, and looms glorious in the retrospect.

All that was but half-way to the Scillies themselves, and then we would attach the row-boats to the yachts' sterns again, like a string of sausages, and make for St Mary's Sound where the great northern divers swim and play, far southward though it be. All the year round some of them are there, although they do not nest there.

The more important expedition to the farther West, where the great conger, ling, and skate lie, with occasional blue sharks ready to make prey even of the largest of these, is not one to be undertaken without due forethought. In the first place, it is no small boat business. Five miles westward in the open Atlantic, beyond the "Bishop" lighthouse, is no very healthy place for a small rowing-boat. Something a little larger and of more substance is needed in that *μέγα κυμα θαλασσῆς* which Homer's mariners met as they passed the Pillars of Hercules.

Besides, these are no small fry that we are about to deal with now. They really are monsters of the deep. The very least of them would be no pleasant companion in a rowing-boat: those of the average size would be apt to tip you over as you tried to get them in-board; and the greatest would be not less in length than the boat itself. A good type of vessel for the job is one of the small steam tugs, of thirty ton or so, which are innumerable around the coast. You should have aboard three or four good stout planks, and with these you may rig up a kind of shallow box or well, on deck, with the deck itself for floor, and the planks, with the side of the boat, as walls, and into this you may chuck the fish as you get them in and deprive them of all life, except the reflex and unconscious muscular wrigglings, by a stab with a big knife in the joints of the neck vertebræ. Even so, a large conger is a dangerous biter, and I have known a man have a black foot for a week and more from the squeeze of the jaws of a conger which had been so dealt with, even though the foot was cased in a thick hard leather sea-boot. So you do not want these creatures, even in a state of semi-disablement, wriggling and sliding at large over the deck: it is better to have them well walled up.

The tackle consists, of course, of deep-sea lines, which are coiled on a frame of wood, with a heavy lead sinker and a cross bar with two hooks dependent from each end of it by a piece of gimp—a great big "paternoster," in fact. Besides this you want something rather "extra special" in the way of size and stoutness in case you see shark about; but this you will only use when the shark shows himself. He will be near the top of the water, and you do not want the lead sinker for him.

But what you do want is a harpoon. Even the strongest and stoutest of the gaffs which you will have fitted to great stems like broom-handles for the pulling in of the skate and conger is apt to be straightened out by the great weight of the shark leaning and lashing on it. For bait, you will have squid—that is, small cuttlefish—if you can get it; but if not, pilchard—which is a "great little" fish of that south-west seaboard—and it must be fresh at that. For all he is such an ugly fellow, your conger is a dainty feeder.

Even so you are but half-way through with the needful preliminaries. The tides must be the subject of your careful study. Away out in the Atlantic it is no time to be lying at anchor with your deep lines out save at the slack of the neap. Neither will you wish to be there at any season other than the high summer—since we are presuming that it is for pleasure, as well as fish, that you are angling. And you need to catch this slack in a reasonable daylight hour, which will allow of your breakfasting and steaming out to

your ground to arrive say a couple of hours before the dead slack. You will be able to hit off perhaps three or four occasions which combine all these conditions during the months of summer—not more. On the day of the neap, and on one day either side of it, you may hope to fish on that bank in tolerable comfort: therefore it behoves you to pray to all the gods there be for fine weather at these occasions. It is no place to be caught in a storm.

Then, the day and hour arrived, you may set forth, with all the preparations made —mutton-pies for luncheon not forgotten. "Let's suppose," as the children say, that it is a grand day—since supposing is so cheap. Five miles you steam beyond the very *ultima thule* of Great Britain, and pray that there may settle over the land none of that "fine-weather haze" which is rather apt to be an incident of "a grand day." For, see, here you are in the open sea, five miles from the nearest land or landmark, and you have to anchor yourself—make no mistake as to this—right over a certain bank of no very large extent. Make no mistake, for if you miss it by so much only as a yard or two, you will catch not a single monster, while just within those yards there is scarcely a limit to the size or quantity of the monsters catchable. They are extraordinarily local monsters.

And to get the "pitch" exactly right—to "take up the marks," as the seaman says —is no easy matter even when you can see the land, and with your glass may tell when this well-known rock or islet is just in line with that other, and when again, on the other bow, another recognised pair of like marking points are aligned. It needs nice steering, clear vision, and usually a good deal of disputation between the leaders of the expedition before you have these marks thus precisely taken, so that you may run down the anchor with any confidence that you are right, even on a day when distant objects are most visible. On a day when the abominable "fine-weather haze" is draping things with its misty beauty, you are guideless as a mariner who has lost his compass and who sees no stars: you may as well go home.

But since "supposing" is, as said before, so cheap, we will imagine no such tragedy: will suppose rather that all has gone as grandly as the day itself, and that your anchor is now run down exactly right. There is a moment of suspense as the cable tautens. "Will the anchor hold?" Yes it holds, the little steamer is firmly gripped. Now let no time be lost. It is rather likely that in anxiety to be the first to catch a fish one or two of the lines will be tangled up in the frantic haste of the unwinders to let them out. You may fish three or four or more lines a-side from a boat of this size. When you have let out what seems an infinity of line, the lead at length touches

bottom; you feel it "dump" as you lift and let it go again. Now you know that your enticing bait is down there in the mysterious depths where the great skates and congers are at their play and at their prey. For a minute or two nothing happens—only the tension is immense. Then the face of one or other of the fishers assumes of a sudden an aspect of gravity that is scarcely human; he gives the line a lift or two to make sure; next, in response to the very decided tug that has thrilled his fingers, the intense gravity changes to a glad conviction, and he begins to haul in, hand-over-hand, as for very life. And just about the moment when hand and energy feel as if they must give way for very fatigue, and that Australia itself must be coming up through the bowels of the earth, there appears the gleam of a great body rising through the green water; a few hauls more and it is on the surface—a conger about the length of a man. As its hungry-looking head is brought to the gunwale, a henchman gives it the *coup de grâce;* one of the great gaffs is jerked into it; it is lifted in-board and chucked into the well, where it lies wallowing with the boat's rolling and its own muscular, though posthumous, contractions.

But long before that first-fruit of all the trouble is disposed of, other fishers will be busy hauling at their lines—congers, ling, and dog-fish (these last to the disgust of their captors) in quick succession will be sent to join that first wallower in the well; and now there is a call from one of the fishers—he has hooked either the floor of the Atlantic Ocean (but he swears that he felt an agitation which proclaimed it to be a very living floor) or else it is a mighty skate. Others come to his help, and hauling on that line, stout as a "cable that in storms ne'er broke," at length bring it away from its mooring: something has shifted. What is it? Has the line given? Was it, after all, fast in the Atlantic floor? No—there is still a great and a lively weight upon it. Slowly it is taken in by four or six hands on the line together, and an immense white disk at length becomes visible, tumbling hither and thither, but still ever nearer and brighter and bigger. Two gaffs at once are plunged into its great slab of a body as it shows above the water; with a mighty lift it is hoisted in—a skate, of how many pounds' weight shall we say? "As big as a dining-room table," its captor will describe it later, telling the great story as an after-dinner tale: and at that measurement we may be content to leave it, not too meticulously exact. He makes a fine show in the well with his big breadth among the fish of length.

But the limit of length is not reached yet. There comes a shout now from the fisher in the bows—"a shark—a shark." He has caught a glimpse of a

body going with a long green gleam, and with a vicious quickness, through the water, snapping at a ling as it was brought up, struggling, from the depths. The great fish seems perturbed, perhaps a little by the presence of the boat, but also by the strange conduct of these fish, which are bottom dwellers and which yet come wriggling up, under a singular constraint, with movements quite different from those that are natural to them. Now we get out the immense shark hook and tackle. Now we slice in half one of the dog-fish which we had deemed useless; it comes in most suitably for shark bait. So you have it, you see, just as the poet wrote: "his hook he baited with a dragon's tail," only you do not sit on a rock and bob for whale, but in a boat and trail for shark.

He is circling in great circumferences about the vessel, showing now here now there, then gleaming off into invisibility. Evidently he is at once attracted and puzzled. But now he catches a sight of this piece of dog-fish—a portion of one very near his own kin. It is not acting in quite that abnormal manner of the other fishes which are ascending as if they want to become surface feeders, and with strangest writhings even so. At that piece of dog-fish he snaps, with gratitude. Let him have it for a moment, to get it well down his throat. Now, strike him! He is firm fixed, and then begins the finest tug-of-war of all. He lashes, and he will run out some of the line, though strong and horny hands are holding on it for all they are worth, and though it is that "cable that in storms ne'er broke"; but at last he has enough of it, he tires, he is brought to the vessel's side. What then? This is no mere six-foot conger to be dealt with lightly and hoisted in with the gaff. The harpoon is ready; at the first chance this is struck into the monster's head; the biggest of all the gaffs is affixed into his tail, and with a long, strong, and all together pull, in-board he comes. Some whacks with a hatchet subdue his murderous activities; the monster, except for the convulsive quiverings, is dead.

Then begin speculations as to his weight, very various. Eventually he may come out at anything between two and three hundred pound — say two fifty. Even with that fifty off the maximum he is not a bad fish. He is, at all events, the last word — the biggest of the day.

After that, it would almost seem as if more would be an anti-climax. The tide begins to run more strongly, the boat begins to rock more heavily. At no time, be it noted, is this any good game for those whose internal economy is liable to disarrangement by the motion of the sea. The boat has all the while rocked and strained at its anchor in a manner that is rather trying. And just now the strain and the rocking are constantly on the increase

as the tide swells. It is time to "up anchor" and be away before that anchor itself drags or its tense cable parts. If we have not exactly caught the whale, as promised by the verses at the head of this most veracious record, we have taken monsters only a little less. To say nothing of your shark, your skate even may run to 150 lb. As for the conger and ling, I believe that 50 lb. or 60 lb. comes near their limit. For myself, I cannot boast to have caught either of greater size than 33 lb. to a conger and a pound more to my best ling. But even these weights were satisfying.

It is no light or easy matter weighing such great fish. When we get home we shall have a machine rigged up like a derrick, and as the fish are taken out of the boat they are affixed, by a hook at a chain's end, to this; and there is attached to another part of the machine a recording dial on which the needle is moved by the weight dependent on the chain's end. And what the total record may be is also dependent on a chain—of very varied circumstance. Among the latest and best of the records that I have heard of was one of sixteen hundred pound of fish to a single boat on a single tide—which, after all, makes very pretty angling.

"THE FALL OF BABYLON."

BY CHARLES OLIVER.

It is difficult to connect Babylon with this pleasant corner of Burgundy where the war has immobilised me. But Sylvanus Conifer cries "Babylon! Babylon! All is Babylon!" And Sylvanus Conifer is an honourable man.

The first sound I hear in the day is often the horn of a descending barge, the message of the master to our lock-folk below. It is a warm, mellow, insistent note, but though it has in it something of a grave summons to sleepers, I linger on my pillow, awakening with agreeable deliberation to the harmonious appeal. Then the Angelus swings down from behind the house, and the thronging vibrations of the sweet clangour on the silent air lead my drowsy fancy achase of them into the immensity for which they are bound. A pest, a mild one, of your immensities! I should lie abed all the morning, did I not want to see the young sun flood the gossamer-meshed, dewy meadows, kindle to a pinky glow the russet fells beyond, and bring out into relief against them a distant hamlet which, with its white walls, brown roofs, Noah's Ark trees, and neat church tower holding out a great clock at arm's length, has the absurd and amiable suggestions about it of the naïve landscape that adorns a Swiss timepiece.

"You are quite right to take things easily," says Madame, when I descend. "At your age, Monsieur, one has no more ambitions." That depends on the barometer, and in any case Madame's is a frankly anti-Babylonian sentiment. For Ambition is the magic flute that pipes up luxurious cities, huge armaments, railways, telegraphs, steam ploughs, and all the other abominations that Sylvanus Conifer has inscribed on his list of grievances against modern society.

If our canal, for instance, was not a canal—a diabolical invention for complicating life—it would please my philosopher as much perhaps as it pleases me. In a solitary stretch, shaded green and gold, I came to-day on a tied-up barge, slumbering over its lustrous brown image in the still water. The barge dog yapped perfunctorily at me from a gaudy kennel that had the air of a greatly enlarged dolls' house or a greatly diminished villa residence; and the master, putting up his head from a mysterious hole in the deck, seemed to have risen, a dishevelled river-god, from his weedy kingdom to have a look about him. There is no more agreeable semblance of occupation for a leisurely man than to watch a low flat boat of Flemish build—there are many refugee boats on the canal now

—gunwale down under its load of stone or wood, making one of the reaches. Sighted long before anything else are the mules' earcaps of bright red twinkling above the towpath. Below them, nine pairs of spindle legs materialise themselves in staggering, jerky progress. Then you glimpse on the water the long black line of the barge trailing through intricately laced shadows and sun-shafts, and this line disintegrates itself with magnificent slowness into a fine medley of colours, tangles of ropes, a shock-headed urchin at a pump, another fishing, an old granny in a white bonnet frying the afternoon's take amidships, and the master at the helm, grim, imperturbable. The neighbourhood is suddenly redolent of fry, of tarpaulin, of hay, of stable. The nine pairs of legs on the bank sort themselves out between four meagre mules and a boy; and two dots that have rolled along beside them develop into an infant and a puppy, who, put ashore to stretch their legs, have discovered a new continent and find it very good. The reverse of the process begins, and in a long half-hour the red earcaps, last vestige of it all, die out like sparks from burning tinder on shades so thick that you confound them with the trees that produce them.

I will grant Sylvanus Conifer that there is a touch, Babylonian, of the latter-day craze for speed about your barges of the Accelerated Service, the monarchs of the canal which, worked by eight strong horses in relays of four, travel night and day and make their journey hot-keel at the rate of something like two kilometres an hour. I thought to get away from the "strange disease of modern life, with its sick hurry," on this placid waterway of the careless Hours. But I can forgive the Accelerated Service its whisper, so faint, of Babylon, when it is kind enough to combine poetry with high pace. Such was one of these meteors that passed me the other day. It was a towering affair in ballast, that took the corners athwart the whole canal with shriek and creak of monstrous rudder and swish of reeds and burbling of mighty green swirls, and it barred the heaven above the westering sun with its broad bands of red and white and warm brown. At the prow, a youth in green tarpaulins signalled their approach to the next lock with volleying cracks of a long whip, and struck against the sky the bold free attitudes of a Phaethon lashing his horses of fire. High over the deck the master leaned back on his tiller, a man of such hoary age and such grand contempt of the towpath that I conceived of him as having seen the dividing off of the dry land from his particular primeval waters and having thoroughly disapproved of it.

The shoots of the pollard elms are brilliant purple now; the young buds haze with golden shimmer the crests of the poplars. Catching golden and purple gleams, the ripples of the canal play monstrously disrespectful tricks with the

reflection of the disdainful moon's full silvery disc, elongating or compressing it; then on a sudden caprice brushing it out altogether and beginning their games afresh. Morning, noon, and evening our canal is beautiful. But my philosopher cannot forget that it is a canal, a mechanical contrivance, a Babylonian device.

"All is Babylon!" cries Sylvanus Conifer. And Sylvanus Conifer is an honourable, if mistaken, man.

Whatever he might do with the Accelerated Service and all its works, I do not see how he could put on his black books many or indeed any of my amiable Burgundy neighbours, who seem to have had no hand at all in propelling modern civilisation on its reckless course. *Te judice*—to your judgment I will leave it.

. . . . . .

There is Grandpère Venoy, a splendid specimen of the Bourgignon small-holder, tall, hard, sun-scorched, with a ringing voice and a sympathetically ugly crimson face, around which his iron-grey beard sprays out untidily. His principal occupation nowadays is the melting of green wax in a crucible, for the sealing of his bottles of brandied cherries. He is the most genial of souls, but he wears at this season a most ferocious air, for naughty are the ways of green wax in a crucible.

As Grandpère Venoy is cheerfully ignorant of all history but that of his own time, in so far as it has touched him personally, he has contrived a sort of pigeon-hole, labelled "ancestors," into which all the world of ante-Second Republic goes: as Methuselah, Julius Cæsar, Louis-Philippe. "Des ancêtres, quoi!" And indeed I do not know if this division of mankind into A—ancestors, B—the rest, is not as satisfactory as any other.

. . . . . .

Giselle and Madeleine, Monsieur Venoy's orphan grandchildren, are charming little girls, always clean as new pennies, with most pretty manners. They are very shy, and I can only get them to kiss me by fining them a sou every time they omit the ceremony. As they have no sous, I pay the fines myself—to them—and we are excellent friends.

Of course they always give me the "bonjour," and they have the idea that they put a touch of splendour into the greeting by addressing me as "lady and gentleman." I argued the case not long ago with Giselle when I met her in the street.

"'jour, M'sieur, 'Dame," says she.

"Bonjour, Giselle. Ah, I want to ask you something. When you see Monsieur le Curé what do you say?"

"'jour, M'sieur le Curé."

"Parfaitement. 'Monsieur le Curé.' You do not say, 'Bonjour, Monsieur et Madame.' And why not?"

"Because—because—M'sieur le Curé is not married. The gendarmes do not let him."

"Parfaitement—that is—of course—well, if there is a lady with him?"

"Then I say, ''jour, M'sieur, 'Dame.'"

"Exactly. Well, you see that I am alone—like Monsieur le Curé. There is no lady with me. So 'Bonjour, Monsieur,' is enough. Do you understand, my little Giselle?"

She pursed up her lips and nodded importantly.

"Bien, très bien. Well, I suppose we must all be running along. Bonjour, Giselle."

"'jour, M'sieur, 'Dame."

What was there for it but to fine her a sou and Madeleine another—by default?

Of course Giselle and Madeleine compute my age at a round hundred, and I have no doubt that when they discussed this incomprehensible business, it came to a final,

"Des ancêtres, quoi!"

. . . . . .

Monsieur Courteau is a friendly old gentleman, deaf and persistent, with a long white beard. He talks in a kind of soft, resonant bleat, ma-a-a foi! He combines in his more leisure moments the employments of cobbler and watchmaker, and I have my reasons for supposing that he uses the same tools in both characters. He is given to petty poaching, is a high authority on local salad oils, and has vague, picturesque ideas on immanent justice. There is a dearth of walnut oil in the country, because most of the trees were killed—la justice immanente, ma-a-a foi!—by the great frost of 1881. But we are not too badly off.

"Turnip, colza, hazel," bleats Monsieur Courteau, "they all produce an excellent oil that goes to the making of what they call a good salad."

I frequently walk over the fells to an edge of the forest where I know I shall find Monsieur Courteau's little donkey-cart laden with sticks and the infrequent walnut, not to mention the trifle of game that probably underlies the whole. And Monsieur Courteau unfolds his ideas on immanent justice—chiefly in regard to the scarcity of what they call walnut oil and what I too call walnut oil, ma-a-a foi!

. . . . . .

Monsieur Poulet is the founder and president of our Democratic Club. The Club is housed in a single room, approached by a carefully zigzaged path through a shrubbery, to which it lends a suggestion of an easy maze, and furnished with a huge bust of Liberty in a cravat of the Belgian colours. It boasts a one-shelf library.

"We read or write or talk," says Monsieur le Président. "And sometimes," he adds gloomily, "we play."

It is rumoured that Monsieur Poulet, a red-hot Radical, started the Democratic Club in opposition to the Chateau, which has all the air of not minding. And, indeed, there is nothing terrible about Monsieur Poulet. He is a tiny, apple-faced, timid old president, with a constant expression of the most dreadful alarm, and when he declaims against bloated aristocracies and so forth, it is as if a mouse were to put his paw down and de-

clare squeakily that he would have no more of this, sapristi! From the fact that Monsieur Poulet always has the key of the Democratic Club in his pocket, I am led to believe that he constitutes in himself the entire membership, and that "alone he cuts and binds the grain" of the democratic harvest, and plays alone. But he is most kind and courteous, has given me the freedom of the Club with the full liberty to use the library "for purposes of reference," and has most correct views on Englishmen.

"I always recognise an Englishman when I see him," says Monsieur le Président, looking horribly scared. "I know him by his grand reserve, his fine presence, his majesty."

I often call on Monsieur Poulet.

. . . . . .

If Mademoiselle Gontrain were not afraid of what the village would say should it come to be known that she received visits from a single gentleman — majestical — I might go to see her more frequently, for she puts a pleasant Early Victorian touch into my existence. Long ago —so long ago that the commune might surely backbite away now and be hanged to it!— Mademoiselle Gontrain spent two years in London at St James's Palace with her uncle, who was messman to the Regiment of Guards quartered there. So she speaks what she considers to be English and was once possibly something more like it. She has an idea that the exact translation of "Mon Dieu!" is "By God!" and the expletive bursts upon our quiet conversation like the clash of cymbals into a subdued orchestral movement.

It was "when she used to be seventeen,"—'tis a habit I lost many years ago, and she even more,—that Mademoiselle Gontrain was at St James's. She remembers Queen Victoria, "a nice lady," and the Dowager Duchess of Cambridge, "another nice one," on whom the Queen would come to call. She always had a greeting from the Prince of Wales, as Edward the Seventh was then, when he came to dine at the Mess: and he, too, was nice. From the eagerness with which Mademoiselle Gontrain inquires after certain vivid places of entertainment in the proximity of Leicester Square, I expect that the messman showed his niece some rather murky sides of London life—when she used to be seventeen—by God!

. . . . . .

Of an evening the neighbours drop in for coffee. Grandmère Venoy, somewhat bent, somewhat weary of life, somewhat sloppy, arranges Giselle and Madeleine on low stools at her side, and the little orphan girls snuggle in to her and sleep with their golden heads propped up against her ancient flannel jacket. Monsieur Courteau is there, ma-a-a foi! and Monsieur Poulet, Radical dormouse. Mademoiselle Gontrain nurses a rheumatic hand, by God! And Grandpère Venoy discourses of the Dominicans—des ancêtres, quoi!—who had a monastery here and now walk their vaults,

carrying their heads under their arms, for reasons best known to themselves.

I cannot see the Babylon in all this. But "Babylon! Babylon!" cries Sylvanus Conifer. And with his gentle wistful smile he adds pleasantly—

"I am waiting, Monsieur, I am hoping even—for the Fall of Babylon."

. . . . . .

It is over the pseudonym of "Sylvanus Conifer" that my philosopher contributes to the Latin paper edited by Arcadius Avellanus. Only his very short stature and his rather too broad and high-mounting shoulders reveal the fact, which you speedily forget, that Sylvanus Conifer is slightly deformed. He has lively, kind black eyes and a wide, very mobile mouth. A thick shock of iron-grey hair tosses about his head in a carefully ordered disorder, and his fringe of iron-grey beard curls up at the edges as if the fire of his brain had scorched it. His hands fascinate you: large, white, finely shaped and remarkably flexible. They are his strong point: he knows it, and he brings them into constant play with harmless coquetry. He sits very low, and at table you see little of him but his beautiful hands and his interesting head deeply sunk between his shoulders.

That perhaps is the reason why Sylvanus Conifer generally stands, for if he is to be conceived of as a head and two hands, a man is but a ghost before his time. He takes up his position by preference behind a chair, one elbow resting on the back, one foot slightly advanced. He is the most erudite of men, and has a wonderfully good and neat memory, from which he gets down his facts as he gets down his books from his large and scrupulously arranged library. Whenever he opens his mouth, Sylvanus Conifer delivers you, in his warm and eager voice, a clear, logical, conclusive dissertation; he speaks in lectures, and his elbow-prop of the moment loses its humdrum character and demands capital honours as a Professorial Chair of Widely Extensive Knowledge.

Though France and her history have no secrets for him, and he juggles with the French dates and talks of Clovis and Philipp the Bald with almost terrifying familiarity, it is in the Latin classics and neo-classics that Sylvanus Conifer is most at home. He has mastered the liturgy of the Roman Church with such thoroughness that he claims to be able to find his way about in the Antiennes, though I must confess that, when I accompany him to Vespers, he seems to lose himself as extravagantly in his missal as I in mine. I seldom leave him without a Latin volume in each pocket: the histories of Tacitus, for instance, to keep me in the paths of classicism, and the 'Conversations of Erasmus' to seduce me from those paths and instruct me how to pass the neo-classical time of day with gravity or in

your rollicking vein. For he holds that Latin is to be the universal language, the cord that will bind the regenerated world together, and he begs me to join with him in doing our trifle of binding. I am afraid the work is not very solid, not very even. When we talk in the universal language I have the impression of submitting selections from the Public School Latin Primer, scraps of Erasmus, and purloinings from Calepin, the lexicographer, to the benevolent but perplexed consideration of Marcus Tullius Cicero.

Sylvanus Conifer is a cheerful pessimist and at amiable warfare with things in general and in particular. When he attends Vespers, he takes—and keeps—his cues in such an emphatic and deliberate fashion that he overlaps Monsieur l'Archiprêtre at each end of his sentences, and the office seems to consist wholly of responses. This is by way of protest against the fact that, while all the people should say "Amen," they are not allowed the time or breath to do so. He writes to the Bishop—in Latin—on this matter. Monseigneur refers Sylvanus Conifer to the diocesan Professor of Dogma. The diocesan Professor of Dogma hints—in elegant French—that Sylvanus Conifer might, as it were, mind his own business. Whereupon Sylvanus Conifer begins again. For it shall never be that, for lack of good wholesome nagging, the people shall not have time to say "Amen."

He makes the reproach against modern life that by its intensity it wears down vigorous races to weaklings, degenerates, like himself. He comes of a fine old Burgundy stock which was robust enough in its origins. His great-grandfather served in the Napoleonic armies, and for sixteen years did not set foot in France. When he came home after the First Abdication, he set to cultivating the family vineyards, but the Hundred Days disarranged all his plans. At the approach of the Allied Armies he hid himself among his vine-stocks, from which, however, he sallied out to cudgel a trio of Cossacks who were making free with his cellars. After this there was nothing for it but flight to Paris. His way with children did not much differ from his way with Cossacks, and his descendants—an Engraver at the Mint especially, Commander of the Legion of Honour—rise up and call him blessed.

Sylvanus Conifer shows you with pride the service sheet of another ancestor of his, a Napoleonic conscript, who, in an action of the Peninsular Campaign, shouting "En avant!" and heading a bayonet charge, recaptured an abandoned gun. "If there is a cross for our regiment," said his comrades, "it will be for thee." The gallant boy was laid up of his wounds at Barcelona for two months, and when he came out of hospital, he found that the cross had gone to an older man, for where all were heroes

you had to fall back on seniority. The Conscript's regiment was one of those that went over to Napoleon on the return from Elba. It was a touch-and-go business: they knew, writes the Conscript, that if the venture failed they would all be put to the edge of the sword. The Emperor had the regiment formed into square, and harangued the officers in the centre. "I will defend you," cries the ghostly voice, "or I will die with you." Then the narrative leaps to Brazil, France having become too hot to hold the Conscript, and back again two years later to Burgundy, where we find the Conscript clamouring vainly for his cross and founding an enormous family to back his clamours. His descendant of to-day has twelve arrows in his quiver. Little wonder that Sylvanus Conifer calls every man on the fell-side his cousin!

It was a brother of the Conscript's, the Notary of the village, who, when the Cossacks came up our valley, locked all the women and children into the church tower, put the keys in his pocket, and defied the Muscovite invader to his beard. The Cossacks, impressed by the bold demeanour of Maître Tabellion, made him a present of a bag of coffee and rode away. The Notary's little daughter first tasted coffee that evening, and the first time was not the last, for she died prematurely of coffee, thirty-six thousand cups of it, in her ninety-eighth year. She was Sylvanus Conifer's grandmother, a fierce, merry, decided little lady, who swore like her uncle, the Conscript, when she did not get her coffee, though the Faculty declared it would kill her, as indeed it did. She was very independent of character, and, when well on to fourscore and ten, would start off on solitary rambles, from which she was often brought home, gay and impenitent, with her face all blistered by the nettles of the ditch from which she had been rescued. At the end of her life her children rigged up a barrow for her, the only wheeled thing that could negotiate the steep paths of the country. But she never quite took to the barrow, regarding it as a soft, luxurious, Capuan vehicle.

If my philosopher's ancestors have not bequeathed him their physical energy, they have passed on to him unimpaired intellectual powers and a most pleasant house, that the artistic taste of Sylvana Conifera has most charmingly adorned. Into the stone lintel of the front door Sylvanus Conifer has caused to be carved—by a cousin—the legend "Thebas novi, rus veni," and you feel that he has done well to desert Thebes—read "Paris"—for this sweet rural retreat. His own study is a great, dim, low room, whose subdued tones and quiet, sparse furnishing are an admirable setting for the fine little marble replica of Michael Angelo's Slave on the mantelpiece. Here among his books the gentle pessimist meditates

systematically on the Fall of Babylon. He has placed his sanctum at my disposal for the same purpose. But the plague of it is that I cannot meditate to order, and Babylon never seems so far away from me as when I am seated on the old oak faldstool that is Sylvanus Conifer's oracular tripod.

Sylvana Conifera, delicate and placid, inhabits the upper storey, which, by the suppression of partition walls, has been converted into one long gallery, many-windowed, floored with lustrous tiles of dull brown. The position that the slave occupies in the philosopher's study is accorded here to an adorable Virgin and Child in richly coloured Flemish glazed ware: her lips puckered for an eternal kiss, the Holy Mother has bent three hundred years over the upturned face, rosy and smiling, of her Babe. Sylvana Conifera sits at her organ, a matronly St Cecilia, haloed by the snow of her hair, or retouches her water-colours. The care of her philosopher is her chief thought and that of Rhoda, her handmaid. Rhoda is an energetic and capable Burgundian girl, who has her own formula for calling her world to table. It runs, "Madame est servie. Voilà!" and may be interpreted, "Madame is my mistress and Monsieur is my cousin. Voilà!"

There seems to be no absolutely conclusive arguments in support of Sylvanus Conifer's pessimism, but one can be very happily pessimistic without conclusive arguments. The war has strongly developed this side of the little philosopher's character. He lies long abed—Sylvana Conifera and Rhoda encourage his late rising for obscure domestic reasons of their own — and arranges the lines on which Babylon is to fall: the modern civilisation whose mad rush has rudely pushed him aside. The war will last out comfortably for seven years. The nations are all to be plunged in the blackest ruin, for they will be incapable of paying the interest on their enormous national debts. There will be an incalculable dearth of labour, especially of the skilled labour which is not trained in a day. The mentality of those who live to return home from the battlefields will be so greatly changed that a new race of tired sleepy men will people Europe. Machinery will have been deteriorated beyond redemption by the wear and tear of war, or annihilated by German pillage. We shall be reduced perforce to the Simple Life in its simplest expression. Ruined cities will not be rebuilt: their inhabitants will make shift with the roughest wooden shelters. Railways and canals will fall into disuse: mails, if there are any, will be conveyed by horse: steam navigation will become a thing of the past, and the height of luxury in travelling will be a fifteen months' journey to Constantinople, by sampan as far as Marseilles and on by felucca. The philosopher hardly leaves a watch for Monsieur Courteau to cobble, and the little

Giselles and Madeleines of the future are apparently to revert more or less to a state of nature, and say "'jour, M'sieurs, 'Dames" to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. As for the Church, in view of that "Amen" business, Sylvanus Conifer prophesies the most unsmooth things for her. It is a murky picture—by God! —but Sylvanus Conifer in his more cheerful moods lightens it up a little by arranging the Fall of Babylon as a Thousand Years' Sleep, of which the world, feverishly active since the unfortunate discovery of America, has great need. And when the world has slumbered its thousand years, and in conscious intervals thoroughly mastered the conversational niceties of the Latin language, it will awaken refreshed and go on more reasonably.

These are some of the ideas which Sylvanus Conifer hatches on his pillow and expounds later in the day, standing behind a chair, making play with his beautiful white hands, his face aglow. He works each proposition up into a neat lecture, which has the one defect of being monstrously discursive. But Sylvana Conifera and I listen meekly: it is such a pleasure, his only one, to the little gentleman to be pessimistic—and discursive. Thus that suggestion of a sampan-felucca voyage to Constantinople is introduced by a disquisition on biremes and triremes, with Sylvanus Conifer's scholarly opinions as to how the ranks of rowers were or were not arranged. The necessary abandonment of the ravaged cities to their ruin is illustrated by the slow growth of Paris, statistics taken on that subject under Julius Cæsar, St Louis, the Grand Monarque, the Third Empire, and the Second Republic, and the observations made by the Engraver of the Mint, Commander of the Legion of Honour. Sylvanus Conifer rains knowledge. He is such an eager, pitiful, "sympathique" little Jupiter that I cannot find it in my heart to put up the umbrella of contradiction. And he does what he likes with Babylon.

Sylvana Conifera and I are not alone to suffer from our philosopher's discursiveness. Sent out one evening to see why he did not come to dinner, I found him in the street expounding to a white-bloused workman, who appeared to be stunned by his eloquence, the origins and aims of the Society of Jesus.

"He is my cousin," explained Sylvanus Conifer as I led him in. "He has written a poem accusing the curés of having brought about the War. Which, of course, is absurd."

You see what a long way Sylvanus Conifer has to go back to prove that the responsibility for the War does not rest with the curés.

. . . . . .

It was a majestic, sombre western sky, with jags and horizontal splits of fiery orange. Against such a background St John should have seen "a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was

Death, and Hell followed with him."

On a ridge over the valley, Sylvanus Conifer was silhouetted, his cape whipped out in black flutters by a wild, rain-laden evening wind. He stood immobile, looking out over the great Burgundy plain at his feet. I knew that his constant vision was before his eyes, that he saw Babylon falling, falling.

That menacing rout of black mists went sweeping eastward. On my mind there flashed the tremendous words of a greater prophet than Sylvanus Conifer:

"Thou shalt take up this parable against the King of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the exactress of gold ceased! . . .

"The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. . . .

"They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms? . . .

"All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. . . .

"But thou . . ."

And the storm swept ever eastward, where Babylon lies.

But the western sky was calm and clear now, suffused with a pink sunset glow. Sylvanus Conifer had disappeared. And the sickle of the young moon was hung up silver in the peaceful heavens.

FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

THE MONEY-DOUBLER.

To "double" money is, I suppose, to increase it one hundred per cent—an act in itself neither moral nor immoral. But on the Gold Coast the operations of the money-doubler are apt to fall within that portion of the Criminal Code which treats of stealing and kindred offences.

The present state of the colony is favourable to the magician. Of late years the cocoa-growing industry has increased by leaps and bounds, and, starting in the Eastern Province, has spread prosperity north and west, penetrating even to distant, but since the rising in 1900 now peaceful, Ashanti. The farms, owned and cultivated by the natives themselves, yield large profits in a good season, but while there are indications that what we call a rise in the standard of living is spreading, on the whole the use of money is unfamiliar to the people, for much is still buried, and much, on the other hand, squandered.

The people on whom the prospect of quick and easy gain has suddenly dawned show a curious combination of simplicity and shrewdness, of credulity and covetousness.

It was in the month of May of last year that rumours first became current concerning the notorious money-doubler, Kwamin Akinni. This man, it was said, was turning the town of Apa upside down, parading openly in a hammock like a chief, with bands and followers, throwing money to the populace, and doing, by all accounts, a flourishing nefarious trade. People said that the money-doubler, in order to get over the obstacle of a previous conviction, gave out that Government had declared he was never to be imprisoned again, and that the Chief Justice himself had witnessed his skill; it was even whispered that he had the support of the native corporal and constable, constituting the police force of the town.

In the little port of Apa the conditions of life and mixture of races common in Gold Coast towns appear in epitome. There is the old fort above the sea flying the Union Jack, surrounded by the densely-packed "swish" (mud) huts of the fishermen, the original inhabitants.

Running inland to the cocoa district are the trade roads, along which has sprung up a motley collection of stores and semi-European buildings. Set in the midst is a fine stone-built Wesleyan church, and on the top of a considerable height, stands the Government rest-house, commanding a wide view of land and sea, in which the solitary hill of Mankwadi, home of hyenas

and porcupines, forms a landmark to sailors. In addition to fishermen, labourers from the Kru coast, and wandering Hausas, the town is inhabited by a fair number of "scholars," possessing as a class a veneer of European civilisation over a solid basis of native superstition and thriftlessness. It was for such that the money-doubler spread his nets.

Evening seances were held in a native house, to which, attracted by a brass band on the verandah, the people flocked to see the magic and to buy sovereigns for silver. In this no one was more eager than Mensah, the retired storekeeper. Many years before at Accra he had had dealings with Akinni, but these had been cut short by a term of imprisonment awarded to the latter by an unsympathetic tribunal, and at the time of the foregathering at Apa, Mensah was still owed £100. The meeting was dramatic, Akinni welcoming Mensah with outstretched arms, and exclaiming, "Thank God, you are still alive! Now I shall be able to finish your business for you." And so, by a preliminary present to Akinni's followers, the account was reopened, and on the same evening followed by a demonstration of the master's powers.

Standing at a table in the hall of Mensah's ramshackle house, Akinni, robed in his native cloth, called for an egg, which, when brought by Mensah's son, he placed upon a plate and covered with a handkerchief; next, after some by-play in the manner of a conjuror and muttering magical words, Akinni broke the egg, removed the covering, and behold thirty sovereigns!

"Who will buy the thirty sovereigns for fifteen pounds in silver?" called out the magician to the people, and amid excitement Mensah stepped forward with the money. But the time had not arrived for Mensah to receive the gold, for the plate, covered by another plate, was put under his bed in an adjoining room, and he received strict injunctions not even to look at it for the present.

A night or two afterwards another trick on a larger scale was performed in the same room in the following manner:

A large enamel basin of sand was placed before Akinni, who with a shilling made impressions on the surface. After covering the whole with a cloth it was removed to an empty room opening out of Mensah's hall, the door closed, and Nfarfa, Akinni's nephew, was put on guard. Nothing further was done until the following night, when Akinni and Nfarfa entered the empty room, returning immediately with the basin. But when the cloth was removed all present were amazed to see that the sand had been turned into florins and shillings. Naturally the value of such a mass required to be ascertained, and the counting of it was entrusted to Nfarfa, who, working during the day, on the next night reported progress to the amount of £700. In the meanwhile

Mensah was paying various sums, sometimes borrowed, to Akinni, the transaction between the pair being that for £400 Mensah was to "buy" £800, the £100 parted with at Accra being credited. Eventually the required amount was raised, paid over and entered in a cash-book, and the return of the magician to bless the basin and transfer its precious contents was eagerly awaited. No access to the room was permitted by Nfarfa, who guarded it night and day. The date fixed arrived, but most unfortunately urgent business called Akinni to the bush, and the assistant magician deputed for the benediction failing for some unaccountable reason to carry out the business, Mensah was again put off.

Yet to the end the man's faith was great, and he might still be waiting for the money had not the unexpected arrival of the Assistant Commissioner of Police at Apa, and the arrest of Akinni, induced him at length to look for the treasure.

Alas! gone were the thirty sovereigns, the silver was sand again, and his old friend was lodged in the new police barracks ten miles away!

In due course a small, middle-aged man, having the appearance of a heavy drinker, but possessing a nose more prominent and intelligent than that of the average negro, came before the District Commissioner for remand. The hearing was fixed for the following week, and Akinni released on heavy bail, which, as is nearly always the case, was at once forthcoming.

But lawyers do not work for nothing, and it was necessary to raise funds for the defence; hence the departure of Akinni, on the same day, for the little bush village inland where his treasure was buried or concealed. Hence, also, the departure for the same destination of the energetic Assistant Commissioner of Police armed with a search-warrant for the said treasure. The Commissioner's design was, by making a night march, to arrive at daybreak at the village, where, guided by an informer, he would secure the booty before it could be removed to a safer place.

But the best-laid schemes o' mice and men — even of policemen — gang aft a-gley. Setting out in the darkness from the place at which he had rested, following little known and at that hour deserted bush paths, doubtful as to the position of the village, and at first led to another of the same name, the tropical early morning mists were already curling up under the risen sun when the Commissioner entered the home of the money-doubler. At once the alarm was given: Akinni was hurried into his house by his friends and the door shut upon him; but at the critical moment the informer faltered, protesting that he would be made away with were he to assist the police. During the palaver that ensued Akinni was heard within loudly protesting against his imprison-

ment, and trying to batter down the door of the hut. But nothing in fact could be done—the secret of Akinni's hoard had been kept.

The trial came on at the July Assizes. Mensah told his amazing tale of greed and credulity with composure, witnesses were called and contradicted themselves and each other, the lawyers did their best, but the facts were damnably against the prisoner.

He is now serving a term of fifteen years' imprisonment, during which he will have leisure, possibly, to practise his art among the warders. Strange things have happened on the coast.

The sand and silver trick appears to have been managed with the help of Nfarfa. The egg trick was a really clever bit of conjuring by one who had never been to Europe, for the egg called for and shown to the audience was an ordinary native egg far smaller than those laid by English fowls, and incapable of containing thirty sovereigns. Akinni must have performed scores of times without detection, but a close observer noted that the shell of the egg apparently broken was of a shade different from that of the egg first seen on the plate, and he suggests that this trick, like that of the sand turned into silver, was done by substitution before an excited credulous audience amid the distractions (and they are considerable) of a native band operating at close quarters.

The gains accruing to Akinni throughout a long career in various parts of the colony must have been immense, were Mensah's a typical case. Like impostors all over the world, Akinni relied largely upon show and self-confidence, as was illustrated by his remark after the case before the magistrate was closed, and he was again at liberty until his trial. "Now," said he, "I can go and make plenty money again."

Since the above was written Akinni has fulfilled expectations as to turning a dishonest penny in prison.

He was sent out with three other prisoners, in charge of a warder, to cut firewood for the prison kitchen. Having arrived at a spot remote from observation, the warder halted the gang and produced a cloth. In a few moments Akinni had exchanged his prison uniform for the customary native garb, provided by the warder. Leaving the rest of the gang with the warder to cut firewood, he repaired to the neighbouring village and there practised his art as of old. That evening four convict prisoners in prison dress, each with a bundle of firewood and in charge of a warder, returned to Cape Coast prison. But somebody gave the show away. It was not the warder, for he was to receive twenty per cent of Akinni's profits; but, according to information received, Akinni's sentence has been increased by an extra five years' imprisonment. Poor Akinni!

C. H. P. Lamond.

THE RESIDENT ALIEN.

I.

THE British Dominions in India cover an area which at this moment I am not prepared to specify exactly, but it is certainly very large. There is in this area a certain number of European persons, again not clearly defined, but again certainly very small. It follows from this quite naturally that it is well and advisable for these few European persons to adhere so far as may be one to another; and also that when, by disagreeableness of personality, stress of circumstance, or financial collapse, any such item becomes alienated from the remainder of his caste, he is quite utterly lost. There have been many examples of this: and among others that of the Rev. Christian Eijenstad, who represented the Aryan Zionist Mission of Quebec in the delta village of Bhiyyur.

Eijenstad had been in Bhiyyur for a very long time; he was disagreeable when he began, and latterly he became altogether unbearable. His nationality—it became a vexed question, as you shall hear, and was therefore gone into with a thoroughness which defies suspicion—was somewhat complicated: he was born at Montreal, his father was a Dane, and his mother was a Swedish lady naturalised in the United States of America. It was a theory among those who knew him that these various elements waged within him a constant and bitter internecine strife, rending him, as it were, in fragments, much as other men are rent in India by dissensions among the units of their internal machinery. This was put forward, by those who wished to make excuse, as an explanation of the extraordinary nastiness of his disposition. He had a violent and arrogant assurance, a great gift for blowing his own trumpet, and a pugnacious preference to be at war rather than at peace with his fellows; in these, said the dissectors, we see the American citizen. He had a shrill contemptuous voice and a saw-like accent, which they attributed to the lower St Lawrence Americo-Canadian. Finally, he had a tasteless slovenliness in dress and manners displeasing to the English eye; this was set down as a Teutonic strain, due to the fact that both his grandmothers were German and his father had spent some years in East Prussia. These analyses were brought forward by those more favourably disposed towards him; others said he was an obnoxious beast, and were done with it.

During his years at Bhiyyur he contrived to annoy a very large number of people. He contrived in the first place to annoy the entire population of the locality for some ten miles every way, — first beginning with the Hindus and Mohammedans, and finally irritating

even his own Christian converts. This was not so serious, but he also succeeded in infuriating every European official in the District. One or other of these two things some men can afford to do; there does not live the man who can complacently do both. Eijenstad used to write long, almost illegible, letters to the Collector, at the rate of about three per week, and when he succeeded in driving the unfortunate official mad—not a very difficult feat with the heads of Delta Districts—he sent up a garbled version of the facts to Government. Men said he used to do all this on purpose. He was wont to search out the "persecuted" in his cure—that is to say, those whose defalcations had brought down the wrath of the Administration upon them, and to urge upon them insidious reasons why they should not submit. He "instilled into them" —this is his own phrase—"the modern ideal of life." The Indian ryot does not understand socialistic principles, but he can misunderstand them in many dire and drastic ways. The people of Bhiyyur did these things, and when the subsequent trouble came upon them they retaliated by bringing endless lying petitions against Eijenstad. You can see what a nuisance such a man would be in a four-division District, nearly all delta, where the normal work took up nine or ten hours of the day. Over and above all these things he committed many unpardonable offences, breaking nearly every unwritten law of Anglo-Indian society; grossly insulted the wife of a Superintending Engineer; spread amongst all and sundry at least three highly unpleasant scandals, involving well-known English ladies; and boasted, because one Government official had done him a kindness, that the man was afraid of him. The officer in question was a native, and Eijenstad in boasting referred to him as a "nigger": this will to the discerning be indicative of a great deal. All these things and many more he did, wearing the while a bow tie of emerald green, and striped worsted socks of pink and white.

These things are not recorded here merely to portray the character of Eijenstad, but rather because if they had not been so, then that which followed would not have happened. It is necessary to show that Eijenstad had alienated from himself—with some justice—the sympathies of every one in the district; it is also necessary to show that he did not care. There spoke to him one day a senior man of the Church Missionary Society, himself also a fisher of souls, reasonably pointing out that nothing was to be gained by such behaviour, and much perhaps to be lost. Eijenstad replied at length that he did not see what these people could do to him—missing the main point,—that it were better they should not wish to do anything at all. They could, he said, blackball him for clubs he did not wish to enter, and refuse him introductions to

wives he did not desire to know, but that was all. The elder man shrugged his shoulders and went his way, for he knew that from all time India has had her own method of dealing with this particular type of fool.

Thus, then, it went on,—successive Collectors being patiently civil, officers of the Bhiyyur Division restraining themselves with difficulty, and Eijenstad making himself complacently offensive. In India things move slowly, and so it looked like going on until such time as Providence, or the Aryan Zionist Mission, should take Eijenstad away.

II.

Things move slowly in India; not so always in less favoured places. Very far from so in Europe in that year of doubtful grace 1914. It was not the Aryan Zionist Mission that made the next move in the affairs of the Rev. Christian Eijenstad, and we shall not be able to say who it was until that day when we can name with certainty the perpetrator of the European War. But a move in Eijenstad's affairs there certainly was.

The Indian ryot is a simple and charming creature. His outlook on life and the universe in which he finds himself is governed by the pure common-sense of nature. He does not see in the fields about his dwelling more than a few phenomena, nor, however, does he see there any reason why others should not elsewhere exist. As a result he has the ability to believe anything, and this capacity he illustrated in the first few months of the war in a delightfully thorough manner. Once a-week or so he believed that London had been destroyed and the King-Emperor blown up by bombs; at rather more frequent intervals he asserted his conviction that the Indian troops had all been sunk in the Bay of Bengal; and nightly he beheld the German aeroplane hovering over his head. He was told it was the planet Venus, but he went on seeing it all the same. This he did all over South India, irrespective of caste or age or any other condition; this he did also in Bhiyyur. In Bhiyyur, however, the prolific local imagination added two items of its own—firstly, that if the Germans came to India the native Christian would cease to exist; secondly, and much more vigorously, that the Rev. Eijenstad was a German.

That this last rumour was deliberately started by some person or persons is a moral certainty, but to pitch upon any one person more likely than many others is impossible. There were at the very least one thousand people in the District who had been sufficiently annoyed by Eijenstad to be ready and willing to do this thing. The most likely, perhaps, were a gentleman called

Singirazu, who kept the Hindu school, and who had suffered not a little from the draining off of his pupils to a rival institution of Eijenstad's; and Jansen, the pillar of the native Christians. Nothing could ever be proved against those excellent fellows, but from events it looked as though they pulled the wires. Now the question of whether or not a man was a German was in these days one in which Government took a keen and exhaustive interest, and the search for the resident alien in our midst was acute: it was therefore, one would think, a simple matter to set Eijenstad right. So it would indeed have been—had it concerned any one but Eijenstad.

The Collector of that District in which Bhiyyur lies was at this time a man called Logan. Logan was the type that has made us what we are in India; he was an Englishman who went through everything, being scrupulously just and fair. He may have had prejudices, but he never showed them. But he had been Collector of the District for three years, and had suffered not a little from Eijenstad in this time; moreover, one of those ladies whom Eijenstad had defamed was Logan's favourite cousin. Accordingly when one morning he received a violent letter from Eijenstad demanding a published declaration of his nationality, he decided that here was a case for more than usually scrupulous fairness. "I hope," said he to his Assistant, "that the fellow's a German. Government are making a nice little place for Germans at Ahmednagar, which is a long way from here. But we must give him a chance."

"He must be a German," said the Assistant. "Only Germans could go on quite like Eijenstad."

"We shall see," said Logan, and wrote courteously to Eijenstad, expressing his willingness to allay any local misapprehensions; first of all, however, he must see Eijenstad's papers. Eijenstad, however, it appeared, had none, and said so very rudely. Logan wrote back suggesting that the Head of Eijenstad's Mission in India might be asked to send him, Logan, a statement; that would be quite sufficient. Eijenstad was very angry, but after a week's blustering in Bhiyyur he thought better of it and wrote off to the Head of the Mission for the required statement. Logan had regarded it as a case for scrupulous fairness—to both sides. He therefore declined to do anything further until the information arrived. See now how what was said at the outset is exemplified! Eijenstad, by sheer disagreeableness of nature and ways, had cut himself off from his fellows, and as a result he was forced to go without that little unofficial word to the subordinates which would have made the difference.

Meanwhile at Bhiyyur the allied forces having set their batteries in order began to play upon Eijenstad. He preached an admirable dis-

course on the War, and found waiting for him at the gate a deferential group comprising half his congregation, who asked him if he were not a German. Eijenstad knew that a misconception of fact in the native mind is not a thing to be played with; he accordingly conveyed the whole deputation to his bungalow—which was very large and spacious—and spent a patient half-hour trying to explain to them that he was the son of the Dane and the naturalised American Swede before mentioned, and that though it was true that both his grandmothers were German, his remoter ancestors were all impeccable Scandinavians. His puzzled audience departed, feeling that he had told them an unnecessarily complicated lie. They were succeeded almost immediately by a second detachment, who supplemented the same fundamental question by desiring to know if he had not a wife in Germany. Eijenstad said he had no wife, as they ought to know very well, and went into the genealogy all over again. He had no more visitors that night, but it had been a trying evening.

Next morning came a strong body of the local Hindus. They had heard, they said, that if the Germans came to India they would certainly do away with the native Christians. Politely veiling their conviction that this would be a very good thing, they inquired as of one with inner knowledge whether or not this were likely to be true. Eijenstad incautiously asked how he should know. Is it not true then, said the deputation, that you are a German? This time Eijenstad was less patient, and cast the deputation outside, but repented wisely in time to receive a second body going on the same lines. To these he delivered a long lecture on the German,—his honest worth, his breadth of view, his general humanity, and the absurdity of supposing that he would be other than delighted with the native Christians. This second company went away with the fixed notion that any one who appeared to know so much about it must either be a German or a liar; in any case, if it were true that the Germans would not dispose of the native Christians, then the last reason for encouraging any German was gone. Eijenstad had to deal with a third set of visitors that evening—Christians again this time,—who said they had been insulted in the streets by the Hindus, who told them they were following a German whose one idea was to bring the Germans to Bhiyyur, and who was merely encouraging the Christians in order that his friends might find them ready to be destroyed when they came. They did not believe this, of course, but—would the gentleman tell them it was a lie? Eijenstad, who was used to the tangled ways of Bhiyyur, woke up to the fact that there was something behind all this, and, being rather unnerved as well as worn out by his wrestling

with the Hindus, made a mess of his explanation. The deputation went away, uneasy and puzzled. It is a fact—among many obscurities—that Jansen was outside, and was very eager to know the result of this interview.

Nothing happened the next day, save that in the evening an aeroplane hovered over the neighbouring village of Penamarta for half an hour. Said the village headman, "What can one expect when there is a German at Bhiyyur. Certainly he will bring the Germans here." The headman of Penamarta was an old enemy, and Eijenstad interviewed him in the middle of his own village street and an interested crowd of spectators. He made little of it. Asked why he said such things, the headman, who was a large man and very well fed, folded his arms and said: "It is well known to all." "That is nonsense," said Eijenstad. "If I were a German you know very well Government would not allow me to be here. How can you explain that?" "Easily," said the headman. "You have given bribes." "And where would I get the money to give bribes?" said Eijenstad. "From the Germans," said the headman. Eijenstad declaimed at some length, but retired from the field a beaten man. It was left to an old hag, bent double with rheumatism, to come peering forward almost into Eijenstad's very face. "Are all Germans like him?" said she, and on being informed by several jovial bystanders that Eijenstad was a very representative type, "Then," said the old lady, "the British will certainly beat them," and spat betel with immense conviction amid general uproar.

The next day nothing in particular happened, but the next was marked by a series of extraordinary coincident casualties in the families of Eijenstad's servants. The butler's mother died in a distant village, the cook's uncle—also far away—had involved himself in a lawsuit over the ancestral acres and his nephew's presence was imperative. The waterman appeared not at all, but was said to have severe fever and to have gone for treatment to his aunt at Penamarta. The cook's matey—that *enfant terrible* of India households—had perforce to cook Eijenstad's dinner that evening, and cooking after the manner of cook's mateys made Eijenstad very ill. He arose the next morning feeling that his grip on things was tending to slacken. He wired to Logan asking whether he had not yet heard from the Head of the Mission. The reply was not forthcoming, and Eijenstad going down to the village to search for it found the branch postmaster reading it aloud with great gusto to an eager audience. Fresh enthusiasts could be seen advancing from all directions to hear. The reply, as a matter of fact, was in the negative.

On that evening also occurred the prolonged engagement with Constable 542. This zealous officer arrived

about six o'clock armed with certain unintelligible papers, and demanded that Eijenstad should at once hand over every weapon he possessed. This time Eijenstad knew he was in the right; some one had sent 542 on this errand, but he had no conceivable right or authority to do so, and Eijenstad spoke his mind freely. 542 was inclined to argue, but being a man of peace, like all policemen in India, he eventually went away. The discussion, however, was watched with deep interest by a large crowd on the compound wall, among whom Jansen could be observed moving about in a business-like manner.

These facts crystallised into historical truth the next day. Eijenstad was informed by various deputations throughout the day, (*a*) that he had received a telegram from the King (*sic*) of Germany about aeroplanes, (*b*) that the Collector had ordered him by telegram to leave the District, (*c*) that Constable 542 had gone to arrest him and had only been bought off by a very heavy bribe. These tales arriving from villages at a considerable distance, Eijenstad began to form some idea of the extent of the net he was in. It was significant that the deputations never asked now if he were a German—they took that much as an established truth. He realised even more bitterly when, the day being Sunday, he beheld his congregations. Jansen was present in almost solitary state. "Where are all the people?" said Eijenstad. "They are afraid to come," replied Jansen, "because the Hindus have told them that there will be a bomb put in the church to destroy them all." "Who should put it there?" said Eijenstad. "You," said Jansen simply; "the Hindus are saying that you got one from Germany yesterday." Eijenstad recalled the package of books, covered with curious Continental hieroglyphics he had received from Italy, and began to wonder whether after all the conversion of the heathen were really a desirable thing.

There followed peace in Bhiyyur for a day or two; but in the meantime that confirmed fire-eater the headman of Penamarta went again upon the war-path. Appearing suddenly one evening with several friends, he all but terrified the life out of the Christian community of his village who—wisely — lived in a separate hamlet some little distance from it. It was a matter of hours, he said, till Eijenstad would be removed as a German, and on that delightful consummation the Christian community of Penamarta had better look out. Eijenstad went down to Penamarta and tackled the headman the next day, but the headman was celebrating his nephew's wedding and was quite above himself and merely abusive.

But on that same evening, and almost at that very hour when the headman of Penamarta was bullying poor Eijenstad's flock, there crept out of the darkness of the Bay

of Bengal the German cruiser *Emden,* fired the better part of a score of shells into the very city of Madras itself, and crept off again as she came. That was a night that will be long remembered in South India, and the news flew north and south like wildfire. Bhiyyur had only the haziest ideas as to what the *Emden* might be: to some it was a mere "machine," some held it an aeroplane, some realised that it was a ship of sorts,—but all knew with the most indubitable certainty that it was coming to Bhiyyur next. True, Bhiyyur was some sixteen miles inland, but there was the canal. Details mattered but little in any case; the main thing was that somehow or other Eijenstad would contrive to bring the *Emden* upon them. The headman of Penamarta arrived with his wedding party, having seen no fewer than four aeroplanes on the way, and paraded the streets with dreadful din, declaiming against Germans and Christians with fine impartiality. No one paid any attention to him, because every one was too busy on similar lines of his own—all save the quiet and composed Jansen, who shepherded the Christians into his house and was closeted there with them late into the night. He thus missed the demonstration which took place in front of Eijenstad's bungalow. It was a spirited demonstration, the headman of Penamarta bearing himself with special gallantry. It came to nothing, partly because 542 and his brethren appeared in strength and patrolled solemnly up and down, but rather because none of the members present had the remotest intention of going beyond shouting. Eijenstad's remaining servants, however, had been stuffing him all day with fearsome tales of atrocities in contemplation, and, his nerves being weakened with the struggle, he passed a somewhat uncomfortable night.

The daily post came to Bhiyyur by runner at about six in the morning, and drifted out at about nine. By it there came a letter for Eijenstad—sealed, to the great annoyance of the postal authorities, who could make little of the outside. "My dear Eijenstad," said Logan, "I am glad to be able to tell you the result of our correspondence with the Head of your Mission," and went on to set forth in all its convincing complications the story of Eijenstad's descent. Eijenstad crammed on a topee and dashed out to impart the news, and cannonaded on the way into a salaaming deputation, consisting apparently of two-thirds of the Christian populace.

They handed him a petition and he read it, and the great news froze upon his lips as he read. It was to all intents and purposes his warrant of dismissal. The petitioners humbly set forth that they could not continue under the wing of Eijenstad, because (*a*) he was a German, and (*b*) it got them into such trouble with the Hindus. Apart,

however, from all such considerations, they had long felt that they were now quite capable of administering religion to themselves; it was better they should sit at the feet of one of their own number. They had great confidence in their friend Jansen. . . . At this point Eijenstad looked up and saw the stolid face of Jansen gazing mildly upon him.

"This is your doing," said he.

"Yes," said Jansen calmly; "now I will be Reverend."

Eijenstad looked for a full minute into Jansen's impassive rather stupid face, and at the end of that time he knew he was beaten.

"How long have you been working at this?" said he.

"A long time," said Jansen. "But if they had not said you were a German, this would not have happened."

"That," said Eijenstad, "is true."

III.

Eijenstad was a man who did many foolish things, but it stands to his credit that he did not attempt to fight the position at Bhiyyur. He knew he was beaten. Nor did he essay to delve out the truth of the matter, for that he knew would never emerge on earth. So he did what he had said he would never do for any one—he applied to his authorities to transfer him to another sphere of work. On the way he called upon Logan and was abusive, and Logan's sense of justice allowed him to tell Eijenstad what he thought of him. He is said to have been brief, but very eloquent indeed.

There will be many to whom this story will appear incredible. It would have appeared so perhaps at one time to Eijenstad. That is because the native mind *is* incredible. But the moral is perfectly clear. It is as stated early in this history, that in India a man standing upon one stool is safe; that a clever man may support himself on two; but that he who attempts to dispense with them altogether inevitably—and on the whole deservedly—falls.

HILTON BROWN.

AN EGEAN VOYAGE.

BY W. J. C.

DURING April and May Beyrout is a sort of clearing-house for tourists travelling in countries round about the eastern end of the Mediterranean. Here they land to get upon the Syrian railways; here, too, they take steamer for Egypt, or for Smyrna to visit Ephesus and Sardis, and to change for Greece; or to reach Constantinople and the coast of the Black Sea. Through Beyrout also pass Moslems on pilgrimage to and from Mecca by the Hedjaz railway.

In situation and itself it is a pleasant city, and inclines the visitor to stay awhile if the times are peaceful. It is built upon hillsides that rise steeply from the Mediterranean,—more blue and alluring here than even off the coast of France or Italy,—and have above them the long north-going ridge and snows of ancient and noble Lebanon. It is Western enough to possess railways and tramways, and clean streets, and good hotels, and to have grown rapidly in recent years to a population of nearly 200,000 souls. Yet it is also Eastern and fanatical enough to put its Christians in fear of massacre from time to time; and so prompt to individual lawlessness that when, three years ago, Italian cruisers attacked the port and sank Turkish gunboats anchored there, that hour of uproar and confusion was seized as the golden opportunity for more than thirty assassinations in settlement of private feuds.

It is said that a Khedivial mail steamer going north from Beyrout in the season carries the most varied company of passengers that any vessel afloat can show. In the saloon you are likely to find not only natives of Asia Minor and Egypt, but representatives of almost every country in Europe, Americans as well, and, with a little help of chance, travellers from Australasia, India, and Japan. And among the deck passengers you may recognise most of the races, foreign and native, from Afghans and Algerians to Turks, which gather or live in the coast lands of the Levant.

With the city rising up before me in yellow and green under hot sunlight, I leaned over the rail of a British Khedivial steamer on an afternoon in April and watched the new passengers come off. They came in a stream of gaily painted boats. There were boats with consular flags, boats with hotel flags, boats without flags, all filled with passengers and piled with luggage. For two hours the foot of each gangway leading to the steamer's decks was a scene of yelling and fighting and scrambling, with all the riotous fury of sound and gesture that Mediterranean

boatmen exhibit in doing their business. Before the time for departure came there was no doubt we were a full ship, with a company so varied that it might almost represent the world.

Just as the anchor was coming up and the boats were casting off another deck passenger arrived. He staggered hastily on board under a load of bundles, and at the gangway's head found himself in trouble with the purser's deputy. He was a medjidie (less than four shillings) short of the fare demanded; and by no searching in his girdle, and then in the knotted corners of a handkerchief, could he produce the wanting money. After the briefest interview, for time was short, he was hustled back into the boat, where he stood among his scattered bundles in distress that would have served a greater matter. He was an old man, with something wistful and pathetic about him,—just such a Moslem as once has been my guide in wild places. So now I was minded to give a medjidie to this old man in trouble, and cast about for a way of doing so without making a scene.

But in the moment of considering how to reach him a voice from behind me said with authority—

"Bir medjid, effendi." (Bring me a medjidie, effendi.) Turning to see who had thus forestalled me, my eyes fell first on a Turk, dressed in well-cut European clothes, rushing for the companion-way, and next upon the speaker, who stood more at my back. Who this might be, at whose sudden word a Turkish gentleman broke into a hasty and undignified run, I could only vaguely guess. He was a figure out of the ordinary; one that, apart from the incident, would have drawn attention anywhere. His ample turban was spotlessly white. As outer garment he wore a long loose gabardine of finest camel's wool, that fell almost to his feet. Beneath it showed patent-leather shoes of the best, and black trousers. At a venture I supposed him to be some dignitary of the Moslem priesthood; and his face sanctioned the idea, and also that he was of Arab blood. In age he might have been fifty; but his full black beard showed no streak of grey. His colour was olive rather than brown; his features aquiline and boldly formed, and of a cast at once contemplative, yet politic and shrewd, and kindly withal. One could imagine him standing for the figure of Moses in a pageant, and affording the Lawgiver no grounds for complaint on the score of dignity and appearance. The messenger returned immediately, bringing a silver medjidie, which he then took to the old man with I know not what of short explanation. At any rate when the recipient gained the deck his long-continued bowings and salutations to the donor on the deck above seemed to show deference to rank as well as gratitude for bounty quite unexpected.

At dinner that evening the passenger in white turban and gown of camel's wool sat apart, and shared a partially screened table with his purse-bearer and a young man in European clothes. A group like this could not travel without exciting curiosity, so now we soon heard who they were. There were those on board who ought to know, and they had it confidently that the dignitary was Shereef of Mecca, and the others his son and secretary.

We counted among the passengers a Russian Grand Duke, returning with his suite and a numerous Commission from studying Russian affairs in Palestine; and Russian ladies —as usual almost helpless on their feet, though graceful enough when seated. There were Turkish M.P.'s conscious of their new dignity. There were French and German officers in mufti; a French theatrical company on tour; and Danes, Spaniards, Syrians, Egyptians, Greeks. There were also charming American girls; American professors with their wives; an American millionaire still unweariedly travelling the 150,000 miles he had set out to cover two years before. And lastly, a few British, at home under their own flag.

In this strangely assorted company the figure of chief interest was easily the white-turbaned Shereef of Mecca. An American lady spoke of him as "extravagantly handsome." The painted actresses ogled him. The Russians eyed him with curiosity, as one unwarrantably superior in every way to what he should have been—contrasting him perhaps with their own priesthood. He kept much to himself, pacing the deck alone or with his son, and appeared little conscious of his surroundings. In the smoking-room, however, he unbent sometimes, and sat down to chess with other passengers. At this game he proved himself the best man on the steamer; but those who crowded round his board did so less for the play than to watch the player.

From Beyrout to Constantinople is not a direct voyage, wherein lies much of its charm and pleasure. Soon after the high land of Cyprus passes out of sight you reach the coast of Asia Minor and enter the Archipelago. Thereafter the steamer goes among lofty islands, through narrow straits, with the mainland bold and broken, in green and purple and brown, sometimes topped with snow, always in sight or close at hand above a blue sea. She stops now at this port, now at another, and may spend a whole day at anchor. So during this part of the journey, with its quickly passing scenes, its goings ashore, and other distractions, the white-turbaned Shereef was almost forgotten. But he was to come into the picture again, as a figure of still greater interest, when we entered the Dardanelles.

This south-west and western coast of Asia Minor holds the scenes of more legend, tradition, and history than any

other in the world can show. And they are not only the scenes of Greek and Roman and Byzantine memories: they bring in Persian, Biblical, Genoese, Venetian, Crusading, and Ottoman as well. They bring in, too, in a lesser way, your own country, the most remote of all that have figured here. Every bay and headland has its stories; each island its long and varied history; each gulf is strewn with historic names; you travel, as it were, through a necropolis of dead states, island as well as city, their ruined buildings filling the part of monuments.

In this region you come unexpectedly upon the setting of old stories. Most have read that twice the citizens of Xanthus destroyed their wives and families and goods by fire, and then sacrificed themselves rather than fall into the hands of enemies. Some too, no doubt, have seen the sculpture from the "Harpy tomb" of this city, now in the British Museum. You pass the site of Xanthus on the mainland coast soon after Cyprus has faded out of sight astern, and the blue mountains of Rhodes are showing broad on the port bow. It stands in the mouth of a deep valley parting the highest summits of the Taurus, which here rise over 10,000 feet beside the sea.

Rhodes is the first island of Archipelago that the steamer reaches. It is Italian now, and likely to remain so, one supposes, and finds satisfaction in the thought. For there is something fitting in the return of Europe to this splendid island. It has been Phœnician in its time; later it was a Greek state, great and wealthy in its little world; and Rhodian maritime law of those days has passed into that of all nations. But for Western Europe the most memorable period of its history was when the Knights of Rhodes, better known as the Knights of St John, held it as the farthest outpost of Christendom against the Turk. They held it thus for more than two centuries. It was the centre and chief territory of their small state, comprising in addition Kos, Symi, and Kalymno, and other adjacent islands, and Smyrna and Budrum on the mainland. The story of Rhodes for that time is a story of French, English, Italian, and Spanish knighthood; of battles and sieges, of success and failure. Under Turkish pressure this crusading state dwindled to the island of Rhodes alone. It repulsed an attack by Mahomet the Conqueror, who took Constantinople. But in the year 1522 the city, and with it the island, capitulated to Sulieman the Magnificent after the famous siege.

In the present small and exceedingly dirty town of Rhodes you walk in the "Street of the Knights" and other quarters, and see residences and buildings of the Knights of St John. They have withstood earthquake, explosion, and neglect, and still display the escutcheons of their old masters. The style of building has had its influence not only in the island, but in

Constantinople and in remote parts of Asia Minor; wherever Rhodian masons have gone you may trace the influence of the Knights of Rhodes who built in the manner of the West.

It is a curious fact that Italians have preserved a traditioned interest in the island, dating from the time of the Knights. On the edges of Italian coins are the letters F.E.R.T. They commemorate deeds done by a Prince of the House of Savoy when, as a Knight of Rhodes, he took part in the great siege. After nearly 400 years his House has returned to the island in better wise than ever he could have dreamt.

You still see the ancient harbour of Rhodes, beside which stood the Colossus, one of the wonders of the ancient world. Like all the old ports in these waters the harbour is small—unexpectedly small for the name its commerce had. The remains of these little ancient basins—for they are no more—scattered around the coast of Asia Minor give a convincing notion of the size of craft that used them. They were vessels with high-sounding names; they have figured in legend and history, but few of them could have been much greater than a Thames barge.

A visitor thinks of the Colossus as he surveys this tiny port lying in the plain on which the town is built. He realises then that a bronze figure, above a hundred feet in height—as it was said to be—standing upon a great pedestal, would tower over the boat-harbour and little craft, and be a marvel, in truth. One reads that its fragments, long after an earthquake had destroyed it, made 900 camel-loads when sold to a Jew. A camel will carry from three to four hundred pounds; so here was something between a hundred and fifty and two hundred tons of metal, a figure that appears to have reasonableness about it.

The island of Rhodes is a beautiful island, large as the county of Surrey, and has a mountain higher than Snowdon. It has forests, fertile valleys and plains, with orange groves, vineyards, and olive and fig orchards. You see myrtle and rosemary growing as scrub. It is said to have the best climate in the whole Egean. For its brave past and our own small share therein—remembered perhaps from the glamorous reading of boyhood—an English visitor wishes the island well. Such a visitor does not think of it in any way as being a natural appanage of modern Greece. Its atmosphere is not the atmosphere of Greece. Its native buildings of this day take you back to medieval France and Italy and England. With a little judicious fostering by Italians it would become an island of the central Mediterranean rather than of the eastern.

One hopes to see the town of Rhodes made prosperous and clean, and the old buildings of the Knights preserved, not only in the capital but throughout the island. One

hopes, too, for decent highways and inns—cleanly inns, built in the medieval European style that Rhodians have made their own. Imagine a stone, low-fronted building, a trellised vine before the door for shelter against the sun, a fig-tree or two overhanging the roof, and glimpses of the blue Egean below, seen, perhaps, through scarlet-blossoming pomegranates. That is what a Rhodian inn should and might be outwardly, for every feature exists, though not, so far, to the making of inns, they being unknown. With good inns and passable ways Rhodes would have more visitors than ever it has seen before. So many that there might be a great hotel in the capital, and another somewhere up the 4000 feet of Atabyros for the more luxurious tourist, leaving the inns and paths to folk who wished to know the island intimately. To these, in return for rambling among the villages, might sometimes fall a pleasure the other sort would covet. They might secure a piece or two perhaps of that Rhodian pottery, burnt in the days of the Knights, which carries the armorial bearings of those lords. It still exists, but is hard to come by.

After passing Symi, now an island of sponge-fishers, the steamer comes in an hour and a half to that finger of land on the tip of which stood Cnidus.

No man can behold the site of Cnidus and consider the city's history without wonder. All the little Greek states off the coast of Asia Minor leave you conscious of an enormous disproportion between the signs of wealth and population and the signs of production. But Cnidus does so more than any. It stood on the outmost point of a peninsula forty miles in length, merely a rocky causeway at the most three miles across, more often only one. It was a city without fertile territory for so much as gardens. Its food, even its daily green-stuff and fruit, must have come by rowing boats from Kos. Yet Cnidus was a state considerable among its fellows; and had great public buildings, Games in great repute, and a statue of Venus that, in a world setting store by such things, was regarded by other cities with covetous admiration. It was a maritime state, of course, but so were the others; and you marvel at the profits they all managed to make in competition. One is led thereby to speculate upon the condition of Asia Minor at that time. For in the western districts of that region must have been the wide tilled lands whose products enabled these early forerunners of Venice and Holland to grow rich by traffic. You notice, too, that the ancient cities of the islands always face the mainland from the nearest possible point. Not on the score of harbours, for there are as good or better on the outer coasts; but to secure shortest line for traffic when oars were the propelling means. So it was with the cities of Rhodes, and Kos, and Samos, and Chios, and Mitylene. The inner waterway between

the mainland and the islands had the character of a river, with the great cities planted along both banks.

A few miles beyond Cnidus the steamer swings sharply to the west and enters the Straits of Kos, passing close to the island town of that name. The old fortifications of the Knights are visible; and behind them white buildings among trees, backed by a green rising plain that goes up to the central mountains of the island. You see, too, the plane-tree of Hippocrates, its limbs supported by marble pillars. Tradition has it that beneath this tree Hippocrates, a native of the place, held his daily consultations.

But when passing Kos town you are also passing the site of Halicarnassus, a few miles away on the opposite side of the straits. Here was another great city of the old Greek world, one of the greatest and most famous. Queen Artemisia —strangely on the wrong side at Salamis—was Queen of this city; of it, too, Herodotus the historian. Alexander came here on conquest, but failed before the Acropolis. And here stood another of the Seven Wonders, the Mausoleum, which in bulk for its purpose and wealth of exquisite sculpture would be a greater wonder now than then. Some of its figures, and other fragments from the city, are also in the British Museum.

Of closer interest to us, however, is the old castle of Budrum—the present town which stands upon the site of Halicarnassus. When the Knights of Rhodes built this castle more than five hundred years ago as a formidable mainland outpost of their island state, English Knights of the Order were here in strength. One of the great towers was erected by them, and to commemorate their country and themselves they represented the Arms of England and their own shields in the outer walls. It is said that among the escutcheons so displayed are those of King Henry IV. and seventeen Knights of the Garter. Budrum, one observes, has become a base for German submarines in these times.

Two hours after the steamer passed Budrum a thunderstorm came up from the north. It travelled west of the steamer, a vast bank of black and leaden cloud fringed with a ragged upper edge of gold, and left the whole eastern sky clear, and sunlight still upon the mainland mountains. When abreast of us it was a perfectly detached and circumscribed storm seen in progress at a distance, with clear sky before and behind it. Lightning flashed from its recesses. There were veils of rain, and slanting shafts of sunlight that pierced the clouds. And between us and the storm were the small islands and islets, Leros, Lepsia, and many others, stretching on in a chain towards Samos. In the gloom they were inky blue hills rising abruptly from the sea as barren and formless rocks. But from time to time a beam of sunshine like a searchlight would strike through the clouds and fall

upon an island, and where it fell the vivid green of vegetation appeared.

"Why do the passengers ask of me for Patmos?" the Greek second officer of the steamer inquired while the storm was still passing. The island showed at the time between Lepsia and Arki, but outside them—a long, purple-black rock broken in outline, with the tail of the storm dragging over it. And just to the south was a red sunset sky against which Lepsia stood outlined. You hear that Patmos is an island of monasteries, and monks, and sponge-fishers; that it has a Cave of the Apocalypse, and also many legends of St John.

With Smyrna as her next port of call the steamer now took the outer or western strait, that between the islands of Samos and Ikaria. Going this way instead of by the eastern or mainland strait, she passed wide of that small district, crowded of old with great cities, which was the centre of the Ionian world. Samos —in its prime called one of the noblest cities in the world—the ancient capital of the island, stood on this strait; and upon the mainland coast, within a distance of twenty-five or thirty miles, were Colophon, Ephesus, Magnesia, Miletus, and others. Even in ruins Ephesus still draws her stream of tourists; Miletus, however, has had the wider and more permanent influence. She was the mother of colonies. More than seventy were planted on the shores of the Black Sea alone, and after the interval of two-and-twenty centuries Greeks of that coast may be discovered who feel they have more than a sentimental connection with Miletus. High up in the mountains, sixty or seventy miles inland from Sinope—itself a daughter of Miletus—I once found myself in a little isolated Greek village. Its people knew all about Miletus, and claimed descent from fugitives of one of her colonies.

To steam past Chios during the earliest hours of a fine morning, round the headland of Kara Burun and thence up the Gulf of Smyrna, is always a pleasant experience. You may have entered the gulf half a dozen times, yet turn out early to see it again. The mountains are high and abrupt, and carry wood. The shores of the gulf are broken into deep bays and inlets. The expanse of water, too, is noble, and yet not so great as to make the land too distant. From Kara Burun to Smyrna city exceeds forty miles, and the width into the deep bay of Vurla is fifteen or more, but there are islands midway. You also have the historical interest that contributes so much to the charm of a place. For instance, just within the gulf, on the eastern side, is the site of Phocea, from which Marseilles was colonised. On the western side is the island of Clazomene, now Vurla, that was a celebrated Ionian state and city. And, chief of all, of course, is Smyrna itself, firmly claiming, in defiance of Chios or any other presumptuous

island or city, to be the only possible birthplace of Homer, and in support of the claim showing you three streams, each of which was his Meles.

But with all these associations in mind a traveller from England recalls with more personal interest the long intercourse between Smyrna and his own land. He finds again that the reading of boyhood—this time, may be, in Hakluyt—has invested Smyrna with a special colouring. He may chance to remember also various solid early Georgian houses, self-satisfied and mercantile in aspect—like their first owners—standing within a dozen miles of London, and bearing names that linked them with the Levant Trade—names, as it seemed, bestowed in acknowledgment of fortunes derived from that land. Even the pleasant grounds of these houses, containing more of Lebanon cedars and old fig-trees than the grounds of other houses, gave support to the names.

But after all his chief interest is with the voyages of the earlier merchant ships. The Smyrna Trade, indeed, goes back for some 400 years, to the adventurous days of commerce, when as much fighting as trading was to be done. For more than three centuries vessels for London and Bristol came and went upon the Smyrna Voyage, with corsair haunts along their flank, for the whole length of the Mediterranean. A peaceful passenger making the voyage 160 years ago says, in a letter written somewhere off the south coast of Crete—

"Sighted a strange sail this morning and went to quarters." The strange sail proved to be a "ship of Genoa"—and so no enemy; but while upon the subject the writer goes on: "I am armed with a musquet, two pistols like musquetoons, and a Dalmatian broadsword, and my post is on the captain's right." Later he was able to write of firing "some of our pills" into another chance-met craft.

In and about Smyrna a traveller may spend a month and come away with nothing but pleasant memories. Like all cities, it has its own distinctive flavour, the stronger for being in Asia and yet not by any means Asiatic. It is neither Constantinople nor Athens nor Salonika, yet has something of each with characteristics of its own. It is the largest city and chief port in Asia Minor; and the most European in appearance, atmosphere, and prosperity, yet you hear more of brigands there than anywhere else. After Athens and Constantinople it contains more Greeks by blood—nearly 200,000 in all—than any city in the world, and many of them rich; it has also many rich Jews, rich Persians, Syrians, Armenians, and not a few rich English. Yet it has, too, its picturesque poor: Moslems, mainland Greeks, Greeks of the islands, Armenians, and most of the other races to be found on the Levant coast. On Frank Street or the Marina you see

a display of the extremest Paris fashions as nowhere else, it is said. There are more railway stations in and about Smyrna than Constantinople has; there are street boot-blacks by fifties; European clubs and tea-rooms and motor-cars, yet as many camels as at Aleppo. Old Caravan Bridge, among the cypresses up by Caravan Bridge railway station, has not yet lost all the sights that gave its name. Smyrna is, in fact, a city of incongruities: a city of Europe and Asia; of Christians, Moslems, Jews, and, by strict census, Devil-worshippers and Sun-worshippers, living together as best they may.

In Smyrna's crowded narrow chief streets are scenes thrown into the strangest contrast. When entering the British Post Office — in crowded Frank Street itself—you stumble into a flock of turkeys or waddling geese, being driven slowly forward by a man whose long stick is used to herd them into a solid mass. Or you bump into a Greek fisherman from the islands selling inky cuttle-fish, approved as food by some. Two men in Panama hats speak of Berkhampstead School in English Hertfordshire in passing. You hear voluble French and Greek, and laconic Turkish in every dozen strides. There are loaded asses and loaded camels, motor-cars and carriages; and because the street is exceedingly narrow and there are no pavements, pedestrians, animals, vehicles, and birds go intermixed. Seeing a richly-decorated tea-room designated "Le High Life," you turn in during an afternoon to see what this will show in the way of interest. There, among inch-thick crimson carpets and the softest crimson velvet upholstery, you find over-dressed Greek and Armenian women, not at tea, but generally at hot chocolate, and that on a warm day—or what you think is one. They have adopted the custom of afternoon tea, but have been unable, so far, to appreciate the decoction itself; meanwhile they are doing their best. Coming out somewhat quickly and walking a little farther up the street, you discern another fashionable tea-room, with carriages and motor-cars before its door, and go in. And now you have got into an English world, and settle yourself in comfort, for this is Costi's, the English afternoon rendezvous of Smyrna. The contrasts of Smyrna assert themselves even here, however. By chance you hear such a sentence as this, spoken at an adjoining table by one fair figure in white to another such—

"Is it true that the Chief of Police has warned Mr X. not to drive in from Buja?" It sounds as if Mr X., perhaps presuming on his British nationality, had broken some police regulation and been courteously warned against repeating the offence. But with a little better knowledge of Smyrna you would need no context to understand the remark in great fulness. For it meant that the Chief of

Police had reason to believe that if Mr X. continued to drive or ride the seven miles between Smyrna and his pleasant home at Buja, instead of making the journey by rail, he might be interviewed on the way by brigands. Another little conversation that you catch from time to time is interesting also. A man is speaking to his friend about some small piece of land that he had purposed buying. The price was to his liking, he says, the land also; but at the last moment he made a discovery that put him off. Upon the land were certain old olive-trees, and these he found to be vakouf (Moslem Church property). They formed property independent of the land in which they grew. Bequeathed by some long-gone Moslem to a mosque for the nourishment of its priests, and thus becoming vakouf, they were inalienable, or could only be acquired after endless trouble and expense. They carried with them rights of access for fruit-picking, pruning, and digging, which the speaker says he couldn't put up with on his land, so he had cried off. Altogether Costi's is a place to which the visitor in Smyrna is inclined to go again.

There is one spot in Smyrna that gives a view beyond all others, but which some people do not take the trouble to visit. It involves a climb of about five hundred feet to the summit of Mount Pagus, the steep promontory of hill upon whose slopes much of the city is built. At the top is a ruined castle, and about it the few remains of earlier Smyrna. The acropolis, theatre, and stadium are merely fragments and outlines; but the tomb which marks the place of St Polycarp's martyrdom is intact.

From this abrupt ridge there are glimpses of the Egean and Chios and Mitylene; and almost all of the mountain-enclosed basin in which the gulf is set may be seen. In the north-west the open mouth of the gulf merges into the Egean. On the mainland side there, seen across the plain of Menemen—which is the delta of the Hermus—the mountains begin. Gradually drawing nearer they pass round to the north-east where the 6000 feet of great Sipylus rises over Burnabat, delightful village of the Smyrna English. Almost as high is Nif, seen in the east beyond Buja, another English district. And thence, after a gap, come the southern heights and the twin cones of the Brothers, which stand 3000 feet; and so to the west and north-west again, where the still loftier mountains of the Ionian peninsula go on to Kara Burun headland and look across the gulf towards Menemen. A thousand square miles of land and water lie visible around you, and a third of it is blue gulf with irregular shores. Of Smyrna city you see the whole, from Cordelio, its detached suburb on the northern side of the harbour, to Geuz Tepe on the southern, that stretches away to the west. A gleaming white city

of flat roofs, with cypresses and minarets instead of chimneys, slopes down from you to the dancing sunlight of the harbour and crowded shipping. As a prospect of sea, mountain, and city few can surpass it: throw in history and association, and its rivals are hard to name.

Smyrna is better served by railways than any other city in the Turkish Empire. There is one line which runs east up the Hermus valley, past the ruins of Sardis, and after 200 miles joins the Constantinople - Bagdad railway at Afium Karahissar—where English prisoners are now interned. Another goes northward, and emerges on the Sea of Marmora at Panderma—close to old Cyzicus—where British submarines have sought Turkish transports. And there is a third, the British Smyrna-Aidin railway, best of all railways in Asia Minor. It goes south past Colophon and Ephesus, and then up the Meander valley, passing the sites of Tralles and Laodicea and Colosse into the country of mountain lakes—lakes 2000 and 3000 feet above the sea, some of them 30 miles in length.

Round Smyrna lies the richest and most developed portion of Asia Minor, forty or fifty thousand square miles of it. On the strength of Homeric legends, some later ancient history confined to the coast, and half-Greek Smyrna, Greece aspires to ownership of this region. It is a subject upon which one might say a great deal. But one would glance also at Kavala and Serres, and perhaps Salonika, and at Bulgarian Macedonia, which is not Bulgarian.

After leaving Smyrna the steamer passed outside of Mitylene by night, having no call to make at Kastro, the island capital and site of old Mitylene city. Had she gone there she would have followed the beautiful inner passage across the Gulf of Adramyttium and an archipelago of islets over which you see Mount Ida in the north. It is that Ida whence Homer's Jove looked upon Greeks and Trojans; and is also said to give the finest view in the Mediterranean. It commands much of the Egean with its islands: Eubœa on the coast of Greece; Athos and its fellow peninsulas below Salonika; the Gulf of Saros, Gallipoli, and the Dardanelles; the Sea of Marmora and the Gulf of Smyrna. And it is further said that when the air is exceptionally clear you may look right across the Sea of Marmora and behold Constantinople, nearly 200 miles away. So it is said of the view from Ida; and one may readily credit all except as to Constantinople. Before believing that claim one would need to see Constantinople for oneself. I only know that I have often looked for Mount Ida from hills around Constantinople and have never seen it; but so doing I was always looking towards its shadowed face.

Another place of interest upon this inner route is Assos, now Bekhram, which from the

mainland faces across the northern strait to Mitylene. Here stood another of the remarkable Greek cities of this coast. It was built upon a conical rock 700 feet in height rising beside the sea; the city climbed up the terraced sides, and the summit was crowned by a temple. Assos now is rich in various ruins.

An hour or two at Kastro would have shown an island really Greek in flavour. Mitylene is the largest and most populous island of the Egean, and with its mountains and pines and olive-groves and close cultivation some think it the most beautiful. The castle at Kastro is Genoese, and the island, like others in these waters, has seen Genoese and Venetian dominion. When conquered by the Turks in the fifteenth century Mitylene was held by a noble Genoese family, having come to an ancestor as dowry with the daughter of a Greek Emperor of Constantinople.

Even in times of peace vessels are not allowed to enter the Dardanelles by night. And now, during the Italian war, mine-fields had been laid all the way up to The Narrows, and there was no passing except under pilotage. With many others, our steamer waited at Seddul Bahr from dawn till eight o'clock, and then pilot-boats came and took us up in sixes.

Seddul Bahr and de Tott's battery and Morto Bay were passed almost within a stone-throw. They were names at that time without any especial interest; and Achi Baba was no more than an uncertain hump of hill glanced at only for the tents upon its slopes. There were no prophetic eyes among us to see more than grey shingle beaches, like any other, or to look upon Achi Baba in the light of events to come, or to think of sinking battleships among these same mine-fields. By no flight of imagination could a man suspect that in three years' time his Australian and New Zealand newspapers should be filled with references to Sari Bais, and Gata Tepe, and Krithia, and other obscure place-names of this toe of Thrace. Or that in London railway-carriages he should hear them spoken by all with confident fluency. That he should hear, for instance, enthusiastic "flappers" jargoning about the "show at Morto Bay—where Arthur was," and talking as readily of Kilid Bahr, and Chanak Kalessi, and Kephez Point, and all the rest of them, as if just come back from making holiday there.

So white tents upon the Plain of Troy were of more interest to us than the beaches as the steamer went slowly up. But all the beaches, and the whole European shore of the Dardanelles, presented significant scenes even then. The slopes above were bristling with machine-guns and scored with trenches, for there was a large army in the peninsula hoping fervently for an Italian landing. There were tents in every hollow, and sometimes

they showed along a distant skyline like the teeth of a saw. And there seemed to be guns and searchlights everywhere. You got the idea that the whole peninsula was a great camp. Soldiers were digging, cooking, bathing, sitting along the shore, on sentry, and unloading small boats wherever the eyes rested.

With all this evidence of Ottoman might about him, our fellow-passenger the Shereef now seemed to have come into his own. There had been nothing in the earlier part of the voyage to raise patriotic fervour in him, but rather otherwise. The flag of his country could not show itself in its own territorial waters. At Beyrout lay sunken Turkish warships. Twice on the voyage a suspicious Italian cruiser had circled round us. But here we had got into the heart of the chief Ottoman fastness, where everything spoke of Ottoman power having its own way and being able to defy all who might come in hostility. The Shereef walked the upper deck with his son, an obviously delighted man. They began to count the big guns. "Another! Another! Another!" they exclaimed continuously, till counting became a weariness.

At Smyrna the Shereef had been more accurately identified. He was not Shereef of Mecca, but getting on that way. His family, it was said, in which the office of Shereef is hereditary, had been deposed from the succession on political grounds — perhaps only temporarily — and our fellow-passenger was now something like the heir of a deposed monarch. He was a Highness by title; a Senator of the Ottoman Senate, and a wealthy man. His first wife was the daughter of a previous Sultan, and mother of the son travelling with him. All these facts were interesting enough; but with his identity had come out something else. He was known now as one who had an English wife, among others; and the story of his wooing was one of the romances of Constantinople. After travelling with him for five or six days, his fellow-passengers found nothing surprising in the story.

The Shereef could speak English to some extent, but preferred not to use it; his son, however, spoke the language well. Now that they had got into surroundings conveying a good idea of their country's power, they were quite ready to talk to a foreigner. They could talk without a sense of humiliation; they could even find satisfaction in the opportunity. So I was invited to look at the great guns, and consider the numbers of them; also the manifest strength of the troops; and next to note the Turkish fleet at anchor. There was nothing boastful either in what was said or in the manner of it. They spoke more in the way of shy, proud men, able at last to show something creditable to their country. For though the Turkish Moslem believes that his country's misfortunes are preordained by Allah, yet he

feels in his heart that when it comes to fighting he and his people have a native equality with any. He believes that by the operations of Fate his armies latterly have always been ill-equipped, ill-led, ill-fed. Could these matters be altered, he thinks — and rightly—that his armies need fear comparison with none; and that with the change would come a change of Fate. Meanwhile he is proud and shy and sensitive. He remembers, too, the history of his country; how its people are intruders in Europe, yet in spite of all have held on there so far, and is proud of it.

Being English, I was regarded by the Shereef and his son as of a traditionally friendly nation, and they spoke of the reorganisation taking place in the Turkish Army. The Shereef hoped for much therefrom. Money was being spent upon the army freely. The best instructors possible were being employed to hasten the work. In a short time there would be a million Turkish bayonets in an army wanting nothing in the way of equipment and training. When that was achieved he considered that the land might rest at peace without fear of certain neighbours.

He spoke of the past; of the giant bronze guns that had been mounted at The Narrows in old days. In their time they were the greatest guns in the world —and the first. Two mighty Krupp weapons mounted on an earthwork standing out in the water at Chanak, and looking squarely down the passage to the entrance, he regarded with peculiar satisfaction. They were the true successors of the first monsters cast by Mahomet the Conqueror and placed on the opposite shore.

Gibbon describes in his own way the casting and testing of some of these great guns by a Hungarian engineer in the Turkish service. He speaks of a "measure of twelve palms being assigned to the bore"—obviously meaning the circumference of the shot. One such gun was cast at Adrianople. Its carriage was "thirty waggons linked together, and drawn by a team of sixty oxen: two hundred men on both sides were stationed to poise and support the rolling weight: two hundred and fifty workmen marched before to smooth the way and prepare the bridges; and nearly two months were employed in a laborious journey of one hundred and fifty miles." A trial shot across the Dardanelles by one of these mighty guns he describes thus—

"A stone bullet of eleven hundred pounds weight was discharged with three hundred and sixty pounds of powder; at the distance of six hundred yards it shivered into three rocky fragments; traversed the strait; and, leaving the waters in a foam, rose again and bounded against the opposite hill."

He gives this on authority which he says he cannot reject; but evidently had misgivings. He need have had none. You may see and measure stone shot now two

feet in diameter. And there is the evidence of what happened to the British squadron under Sir John Duckworth, which forced the Straits in February 1807. The squadron ran through before a strong south wind without trouble, but returning three weeks later were not so fortunate. They passed slowly, and the big guns got to work on them. One enormous stone shot cut the mainmast of Duckworth's flagship in two; a second, that hit another vessel, knocked three gun-ports into one, and killed and wounded sixty men at the blow. Without much surprise we hear that something like a panic followed on that vessel. Such shot were at least unfamiliar; they could be seen coming; and the blow was devastating. A piece of one of these shot was measured, and found to belong to a ball more than two feet six inches in diameter. Probably these great shot were hewn from marble columns found in the ruins of Troy; for many have come from that source.

What with delays at Chanak and a call at Gallipoli it was afternoon before the steamer entered the Sea of Marmora. Crossing it you realise more than ever what a wealth of geographical advantages Constantinople enjoys. Here is an inland sea that comes up to its walls: a sea in area approaching the area of Yorkshire. It is no marshy affair—there is not a marsh around its shores —it is blue salt water of the bluest and deepest, with soundings of 700 fathoms in parts. It has deep broken gulfs, Ismid and Artaki and Injir Leman, enclosed by mountains. There are old historical ports and cities upon its shores: Ismid, which was Nicomedia; Mudania, the port of Brusa—once the Osmanli capital—Panderma, Gallipoli, Rodosto, and Cyzicus that has memories of Mithridates and Lucullus and the Romans. And this inland sea also has islands: mountainous ones like Marmora, and pleasant ones like the Princes Islands that seem to have been placed for the special benefit of Constantinople. They lie in full view of the city, only an hour away: Prinkypo, Proti, Halki, and Antigone,—hilly, rocky, pine-covered; in summer they are "Islands of the Blest." From old days Constantinople has approved of them highly. Once they were places of luxurious banishment for empresses, princes, and prelates, and were packed with monasteries—no bad test of situation. Now they are the favourite summer resort of Constantinople, — the city's Brighton, Margate, Cowes, and Bournemouth all in one.

During the small hours of morning your steamer arrives off these islands, and anchors beside them, waiting for daylight to enter the Golden Horn. And when you go on deck you see the first sunlight gleaming on the gilded crescents, above domes and minarets that stand along the ridge of Stamboul. Some such first view of the ancient city may be in reserve for the Allied Armies now upon the Dardanelles.

ADVENTURES OF A DESPATCH RIDER.

WINTER QUARTERS.

I. FROM BEUVRY TO BAILLEUL.

BEFORE we came, Givenchy had been a little forgettable village upon a hill, Violaines a pleasant afternoon's walk for the working men in La Bassée, Festubert a gathering-place for the people who lived in the filthy farms around. We left Givenchy a jumble of shuttered houses and barricaded cellars. A few Germans were encamped upon the site of Violaines. The great clock of Festubert rusted quickly against a tavern wall. We hated La Bassée, because against La Bassée the Division had been broken. There are some square miles of earth that, like criminals, should not live.

Our orders were to reach Caestre not later than the Signal Company. Caestre is on the Cassel-Bailleul road, three miles north-east of Hazebrouck. These unattached rides across country are the most joyous things in the world for a despatch rider. There is never any need to hurry. You can take any road you will. You may choose your tavern for lunch with expert care. And when new ground is covered and new troops are seen, we capture sometimes those sharp delightful moments of thirsting interest that made the Retreat into an epic and the Advance a triumphant ballad.

N'Soon and myself left together. Hitherto I have referred to N'Soon (so we called him) as D——, but these blanks are a weariness to write and to read. We skidded along the tow-path, passed the ever-cheerful cyclists, and, turning due north, ran into St Venant. The grease made us despatch riders look as if we were beginning to learn. I rode gently but surely down the side of the road into the gutter time after time. Pulling ourselves together, we managed to slide past some Indian transport without being kicked by the mules, who, whenever they smelt petrol, developed a strong offensive. Then we came upon a big gun, discreetly covered by tarpaulins. It was drawn by a monster traction-engine, and sad-faced men walked beside it. The steering of the traction-engine was a trifle loose, so N'Soon and I drew off into a field to let this solemn procession pass. One of the commands in the unpublished "Book of the Despatch Rider" is this:—

When you halt by the road-side to let guns pass or when you leave your motor-cycle unattended, first place it in a position of certain safety where it cannot possibly be knocked over, and then move it another fifty yards from the road. It is impossible for a gunner to

see something by the roadside and not drive over it. Moreover, lorries when they skid, skid furiously.

Four miles short of Hazebrouck we caught up the rest. Proceeding in single file along the road, we endeavoured not to laugh, for—as one despatch rider said—it makes all the difference on grease which side of your mouth you put your pipe in. We reached Hazebrouck at midday. Spreading out — the manœuvre had become a fine art—we searched the town. The "Chapeau Rouge" was well reported on, and there we lunched.

All those tourists who will deluge Flanders after the war should go to the "Chapeau Rouge" in Hazebrouck. There we had lentil soup and stewed kidneys, and roast veal with potatoes and leeks, fruit, cheese, and good red wine. So little was the charge that one of us offered to pay it all. There are other more fashionable hotels in Hazebrouck, but, trust the word of a despatch rider, the "Chapeau Rouge" beats them all.

Very content we rode on to Caestre, arriving there ten minutes before the advance-party of the Signal Company. Divisional Headquarters were established at the House of the Spy. The owner of the house had been well treated by the Germans when they had passed through a month before. Upon his door had been written this damning legend—

HIER SIND GUETIGE LEUTE[1]

and, when on the departure of the Germans the house had been searched by an indignant populace, German newspapers had been discovered in his bedroom.

It is the custom of the Germans to spare certain houses in every village by chalking up some laudatory notice. We despatch riders had a theory that the inhabitants of these marked houses, far from being spies, were those against whom the Germans had some particular grievance. Imagine the wretched family doing everything in its power to avoid the effusive affection of the Teuton, breaking all its own crockery and stealing all its own silver, defiling its beds and tearing its clothing. For the man whose goods have been spared by the German becomes an outcast. He lives in a state worse than death. He is hounded from his property, and driven across France with a character attached to him, like a kettle to a cat's tail. Genuine spies, on the other hand — so we thought — were worse treated than any and secretly recompensed. Such a man became a hero. All his neighbours brought their little offerings.

The House of the Spy had a fine garden, hot and buzzing in the languorous heat. We bathed ourselves in it. And the sanitary arrangements were good.

Grimers arrived lunchless an hour later. He had been pro-

[1] Here are kindly people.

moted to drive the captured car. We took him to the tavern where beauty was allied with fine cooking. There he ate many omelettes. In the evening he and I suffered a great disappointment. We wandered into another tavern and were about to ask for our usual "Grenadine," when we saw behind the bar two bottles of Worthington. For a moment we were too stupefied to speak. Then, pulling ourselves together, we stammered out an order for beer, but the girl only smiled. They were empty bottles, souvenirs left by some rascally A.S.C. for the eternal temptation of all who might pass through. The girl in her sympathy comforted us with songs, one of which, "Les Serments," I translated for the benefit of Grimers, who knew no French. We sang cheerfully in French and English until it was time to return to our billet.

In the morning a German aeroplane passed over at a great height. All the youngsters in the village tumbled over each other for shelter, shouting—Caput! caput![1]

Later in the day we advanced to Bailleul, where we learnt that the 1st Corps was fighting furiously to the north. The square was full of motor-buses and staff-officers. They were the first of our own motor-buses we had seen out in Flanders. They cheered us greatly, and after some drinks we sat in one and tried to learn from the map something of the new country in which we were to ride. We rejoiced that we had come once again upon a Belgian sheet, because the old French map we had used, however admirable it might have been for brigadiers and such-like people, was extremely unsuited to a despatch rider's work.

Infantry were pouring through, the stern remnants of fine battalions. Ever since the night after Le Cateau infantry in column of route have fascinated us, for a regiment on the march bares its character to the world. First there were our brigades marching up to Mons, stalwart and cheering. After Le Cateau there were practically no battalions, just a crowd of men and transport pouring along the road to Paris. I watched the column pass for an hour, and in it there was no organised unit larger than a platoon, and only one platoon. How it happened I do not know, but, when we turned on the Germans, battalions, brigades, divisions, corps had been remade. The battalions were pitifully small. Many a time we who were watching said to one another: Surely that's not the end of the K.O.Y.L.I., or the Bedfords, or whatever regiment it might be!

A battalion going into action has some men singing, some smiling vaguely to themselves, some looking raptly straight ahead, and some talking quickly as if they must never stop. A battalion that has come many miles is nearly silent. The strong men stride tirelessly without

[1] French, Flemish, and German slang expression. Done for!

a word. Little weak men, marching on their nerves, hobble restlessly along. The men with bad feet limp and curse, wilting under the burden of their kit, and behind all come those who have fallen out by the way—men dragging themselves along behind a waggon, white-faced men with uneasy smiles on top of the waggons. A little farther back those who are trying to catch up: these are tragic figures, breaking into breathless little runs, but with a fine wavering attempt at striding out, as though they might be connecting files, when they march through a town or past an officer of high rank.

A battalion that has just come out of action I cannot describe to you in these letters, but let me tell you now about Princess Pat's. I ran into them just as they were coming into Bailleul for the first time and were hearing the sound of the guns. They were the finest lot of men I have ever seen on the march. Gusts of great laughter were running through them. In the eyes of one or two were tears. And I told those civilians I passed that the Canadians, the fiercest of all soldiers, were come. Bailleul looked on them with more fright than admiration. The women whispered fearfully to each other — Les Canadiens, les Canadiens! . . .

We despatch riders were given a large room in the house where the Divisional Staff was billeted. It had tables, chairs, a fireplace and gas that actually lit; so we were more comfortable than ever we had been before—that is, all except N'Soon, who had by this time discovered that continual riding on bad roads is apt to produce a fundamental soreness. N'Soon hung on nobly, but was at last sent away with blood-poisoning. Never getting home, he spent many weary months in peculiar convalescent camps, and did not join up again until the end of January. Moral — before going sick or getting wounded become an officer and a gentleman.

The day after we arrived I was once more back in Belgium with a message to the C.R.A.[1] at Neuve Eglise. I had last been in Belgium on August 23, the day we left Dour. The general might have been posing for a war artist. He was seated at a table in the middle of a field, his staff-captain with him. The ground sloped away to a wooded valley in which two or three batteries, carefully concealed, were blazing away. To the north shrapnel was bursting over Kemmel. In front the Messines ridge was almost hidden with the smoke of our shells. I felt that each point of interest ought to have been labelled in Mr Frederic Villiers' handwriting — "German shrapnel bursting over Kemmel—our guns—this is a dead horse."

I first saw Ypres on the 6th November. I was sent off with

[1] An abbreviation for the general in command of the Divisional Artillery.

a bundle of routine matter to the 1st Corps, then at Brielen, a couple of miles N.W. of Ypres. It was a nightmare ride. The road was *pavé* in the centre — villainous *pavé*. At the side of it were glutinous morasses about six feet in width, and sixteen inches deep. I started off with two 2nd Corps motor-cyclists. There was an almost continuous line of transport on the road—motor-lorries that did not dare deviate an inch from the centre of the road for fear of slipping into the mire, motor ambulances, every kind of transport, and some infantry battalions. After following a column of motor-lorries a couple of miles — we stuck twice in trying to get past the rearmost lorry—we tried the road by Dranoutre and Locre. But these country lanes were worse of surface than the main road — greasy *pavé* is better than greasy rocks—and they were filled with odd detachments of French artillery. The two 2nd Corps motor-cyclists turned back. I crawled on at the risk of smashing my motor-cycle and myself, now skidding perilously between waggons, now clogging up, now taking to the fields, now driving frightened pedestrians off what the Belgians alone would call a footpath. I skidded into a subaltern, and each of us turned to curse, when—it was Gibson, a junior "Greats" don at Balliol, and the finest of fellows.

Beyond Dickebusch French artillery were in action on the road. The houses just outside Ypres had been pelted with shrapnel but not destroyed. Just by the station, which had not then been badly knocked about, I learnt where to go. Ypres was the first half-evacuated town I had entered. It was like motor-cycling into a village from Oxford very early on a Sunday morning. Half an hour later I saw the towers of the city rising above a bank of mist which had begun to settle on the ground: then out rose great clouds of black smoke.

I came back by Poperinghe to avoid the grease and crowding of the direct road, and there being no hurry I stopped at an inn for a beefsteak. The landlord's daughter talked of the many difficulties before us, and doubted of our success. I said, grandiloquently enough, that no victory was worth winning unless there were difficulties. At which she smiled and remarked, laughing—

"There are no roses without thorns."

She asked me how long the war would last. I replied that the good God alone knew. She shook her head—

"How can the good God look down without a tear on the miseries of His people? Are not the flower of the young cut off in the spring of their youth?"

Then she pointed to the church across the way, and said humbly—"On a beaucoup prié."

She was of the true Flemish type, broad and big-breasted, but with a slight stoop, thick

hips, dark and fresh-coloured, with large black eyes set too closely. Like all the Flemings, she spoke French slowly and distinctly, with an accent like the German. She was easy to understand.

I stopped too long at Poperinghe, for it was dark and very misty on the road. Beyond Boescheppe—I was out of my way—the mist became a fog. Once I had to take to the ditch when some cuirassiers galloped out of the fog straight at me. It was all four French soldiers could do to get my motor-cycle out. Another time I stuck endeavouring to avoid some lorries. It is a diabolical joke of the Comic Imps to put fog upon a greasy road for the confusion of a despatch rider.

On the next day I was sent out to the 14th Brigade at the Rue de Paradis near Laventie. You will remember that the 14th Brigade had been left to strengthen the Indian Corps, when the 2nd Corps had moved north. I arrived at Rue de Paradis just as the Brigade Headquarters were coming into the village. So, while everybody else was fixing wires and generally making themselves useful, I rushed upstairs and seized a mattress and put it into a dark little dressing-room with hot and cold water, a mirror and a wardrobe. Then I locked the door. There I slept, washed, and dressed in delicious luxury.

The brigade gave another despatch rider and myself, who were attached, very little to do beyond an occasional forty-mile run to D.H.Q. and back over dull roads. The Signal Office was established in a large room on the side of the house nearest to the Germans. It was constructed almost entirely of glass. Upon this the men commented with a grave fluency. The windows rattled with shrapnel bursting 600 yards away. The house was jarred through and through by the concussion of a heavy battery firing over our heads. The room was like a toy-shop with a lot of small children sounding all the musical toys. The vibrators and the buzzers were like hoarse toy trumpets.

Our only excitement was the nightly rumour that the General was going to move nearer the trenches, that one of us would accompany him—I knew what that meant on greasy misty roads.

After I had left, the Germans by chance or design made better practice. A shell burst in the garden and shattered all the windows of the room. The Staff took refuge in dug-outs that had been made in case of need. Tommy, then attached, took refuge in the cellar. According to his own account, when he woke up in the morning he was floating. The house had some corners taken off it and all the glass was shattered, but no one was hurt.

When I returned to Bailleul, Divisional Headquarters were about to move.

II. THE CONVENT AT LOCRE.

A puncture kept me at Bailleul after the others had gone on to Locre. Grimers stood by to help. We lunched well, and buying some supplies started off along the Ypres road. By this time our kit had accumulated. It is difficult enough to pass lorries on a greasy road at any time. With an immense weight on the carrier it is almost impossible. So we determined to go by Dranoutre. An unfortunate bump dispersed my blankets and my ground-sheet in the mud. Grimers said my language might have dried them. Finally, that other despatch rider arrived swathed about with some filthy, grey, forlorn indescribables.

We were quartered in a large schoolroom belonging to the Convent. We had plenty of space and a table to feed at. Fresh milk and butter we could buy from the nuns, while a market-gardener just across the road supplied us with a sack of miscellaneous vegetables—potatoes, carrots, turnips, onions, leeks,—for practically nothing. We lived gloriously. There was just enough work to make us feel we really were doing something, and not enough to make us wish we were on the Staff. Bridge we played every hour of the day, and "Pollers," our sergeant, would occasionally try a little flutter in Dominoes and Patience.

At Bailleul the Skipper had suggested our learning to manage the unmechanical horse. The suggestion became an order. We were bumped round unmercifully at first, until many of us were so sore that the touch of a motor-cycle saddle on *pavé* was like hot-iron to a tender skin. Then we were handed over to a friendly sergeant, who believed in more gentlemanly methods, and at Locre we had great rides—though Pollers, who was gently unhorsed, is still firmly convinced that windmills form the finest deterrent to cavalry.

In an unlucky moment two of us had suggested that we should like to learn signaller's work, so we fell upon evil days. First we went out for cable-drill. Sounds simple? But it is more arduous and dangerous than any despatch riding. If you "pay out" too quickly, you get tangled up in the wire and go with it nicely over the drum. If you pay out too slowly, you strangle the man on the horse behind you. The worst torture in the world is paying out at the fast trot over cobbles. First you can't hold on, and if you can you can't pay out regularly.

Cable-drill is simply nothing compared to the real laying of cable. We did it twice—once in rain and once in snow. The rainy day I paid out, I was never more miserable in my life than I was after two miles. Only hot coffee and singing good songs past cheery Piou-pious brought me home. The snowy day, I ran

with ladders and, perched on the topmost rung, endeavoured to pass the wire round a buxom tree-trunk. Then, when it was round, it would always go slack before I could get it tied up tightly.

It sounds so easy, laying a wire. But I swear it is the most wearying business in the world—punching holes in the ground with a 16 lb. hammer, running up poles that won't go straight, unhooking wire that has caught in a branch or in the eaves of a house, taking the strain of a cable to prevent man and ladder and wire coming on top of you, when the man who pays out has forgotten to pay. Have a thought for the wretched fellows who are getting out a wire on a dark and snowy night, troubled perhaps by persistent snipers and frequent shells! Shed a tear for the miserable linesman sent out to find where the line is broken or defective. . . .

When there was no chance of "a run" we would go walks towards Kemmel. At the time the Germans were shelling the hill, but occasionally they would break off, and then we would unofficially go up and see what had happened. Now Mont Kemmel is nearly covered with trees. I have never been in a wood under shell fire, and I do not wish to be. Where the Germans had heavily shelled Kemmel there were great holes, trees thrown about and riven and scarred and crushed—a terrific immensity of blasphemous effort. It was as if some great beast, wounded mortally, had plunged into a forest, lashing and biting and tearing in his agony until he died.

On one side of the hill was a little crazy cottage which had marvellously escaped. Three shells had fallen within ten yards of it. Two had not burst, and the other, shrapnel, had exploded in the earth. The owner came out, a trifling, wizened old man in the usual Belgian cap and blue overalls. We had a talk, using the *lingua franca* of French, English with a Scottish accent, German, and the few words of Dutch I could remember.

We dug up for him a large bit of the casing of the shrapnel. He examined it fearfully. It was an 11-inch shell, I think, nearly as big as his wee grotesque self. Then he made a noise, which we took to be a laugh, and told us that he had been very frightened in his little house (häusling), and his cat, an immense white Tom, had been more frightened still. But he knew the Germans could not hit him. Thousands and thousands of Germans had gone by, and a little after the last German came the English. "Les Anglais sont bons."

This he said with an air of finality. It is a full-blooded judgment which, though it sounds a trifle exiguous to describe our manifold heroic efforts, is a sort of perpetual epithet. The children use it confidingly when they run to our men in the cafés. The peasants use it as a parenthetical verdict whenever they mention our name. The French

fellows use it, and I have heard a German prisoner say the same.

A few days later those who lived on Kemmel were "evacuated." They were rounded up into the Convent yard, men and women and children, with their hens and pigs. At first they were angry and sorrowful; but nobody, not even the most indignant refugee, could resist our military policemen, and in three-quarters of an hour they all trudged off, cheerfully enough, along the road to Bailleul.

The wee grotesque man and his immense white cat were not with them. Perhaps they still live on Kemmel. Some time I shall go and see.

If we did not play Bridge after our walks, we would look in at the theatre or stroll across to dinner and Bridge with G—— and his brother officers of the K.O.S.B., then billeted at Locre. Not all convents have theatres: this was a special convent. The Signal Company slept in the theatre, and of an evening all the kit would be moved aside. One of the military policeman could play anything; so we danced and sang until the lights went out. The star performer was "Spot," the servant of an A.D.C.

"Spot" was a little man with a cheerful squint. He knew everything that had ever been recited, and his knowledge of the more ungodly songs was immense. He would start off with an imitation of Mr H. B. Irving, and a very good imitation it would be — with soft music. He would leave the Signallers thrilled and silent. The lights flashed up, and "Spot" darted off on some catchy doggerel of an almost talented obscenity. In private life Spot was the best company imaginable. He could not talk for a minute without throwing in a bit of a recitation and striking an attitude. I have only known him serious on two subjects —his master and Posh. He would pour out with the keenest delight little stories of how his master endeavoured to correct his servant's accent. There was a famous story of "a n'orse" — but that is untellable.

Posh may be defined, very roughly, as a useless striving after gentlemanly culture. Sometimes a chauffeur or an H.Q. clerk would endeavour to speak very correct English in front of Spot.

"'E was poshy, my dear boy, positively poshy. 'E made me shiver until I cried. 'Smith, old man,' I said to 'im, 'you can't do it. You're not born to it nor bred to it. Those that try is just demeaning themselves. Posh, my dear boy, pure Posh.'"

And Spot would give a cruel imitation of the wretched Smith's mincing English. The punishment was the more bitter, because all the world knew that Spot could speak the King's English as well as anybody if only he chose. To the poshy alone was Spot unkind. He was a generous, warm-hearted little man, with real wisdom and a fine ap-

preciation of men and things. . . . There were other performers of the usual type, young men who sang about the love-light in her eyes, older men with crude songs, and a Scotsman with an expressionless face, who mumbled about we could never discover what.

The audience was usually strengthened by some half-witted girls that the Convent educated, and two angelic nuns. Luckily for them, they only understood a slow and grammatical English, and listened to crude songs and sentimental songs with the same expression of maternal content.

Our work at Locre was not confined to riding and cable-laying. The 15th Brigade and two battalions of the 13th were fighting crazily at Ypres, the 14th had come up to Dranoutre, and the remaining two battalions of the 13th were at Neuve Eglise. I had two more runs to the Ypres district before we left Locre. On the first the road was tolerable to Ypres, though near the city I was nearly blown off my bicycle by the fire of a concealed battery of 75's. The houses at the point where the Rue de Lille enters the Square had been blown to bits. The Cloth Hall had barely been touched. In its glorious dignity it was beautiful.

Beyond Ypres, on the Hooge Road, I first experienced the extreme neighbourhood of a "J. J." It fell about 90 yards in front of me and 20 yards off the road. It makes a curiously low droning sound as it falls, like the groan of a vastly sorrowful soul in hell, —so I wrote at the time: then there's a gigantic rushing plunk and overwhelming crash as if all the houses in the world were falling.

On the way back the road, which had been fairly greasy, became practically impassable. I struggled on until my lamp failed (sheer carelessness — I ought to have seen to it before starting), and a gale arose which blew me all over the road. So I left my motor-bicycle safely behind a cottage, and started tramping back to H.Q. by the light of my pocket flash-lamp. It was a pitch-black night. I was furiously hungry, and stopped at the first inn and gorged coffee with rum, and a large sandwich of bread and butter and fat bacon. I had barely started again—it had begun to pour — when a car came along with a French staff-officer inside. I stopped it, saying in hurried and weighty tones that I was carrying an important despatch (I had nothing on me, I am afraid, but a trifling bunch of receipts), and the rest of the way I travelled lapped luxuriously in soft furs.

The second time I rode along a frozen road between white fields. All the shells sounded alarmingly near. The noise in Ypres was terrific. At my destination I came across some prisoners of the Prussian Guard, fierce and enormous men, nearly all with reddish hair, very sullen and rude.

From accounts that have

been published of the first battle of Ypres, it might be inferred that the British Army knew it was on the point of being annihilated. A despatch rider, though of course he does not know very much of the real meaning of the military situation, has unequalled opportunities for finding out the opinions and spirit of the men. Now one of us went to Ypres every day and stopped for a few minutes to discuss the state of affairs with other despatch riders and with signal-sergeants. Right through the battle we were confident; in fact the idea that the line might be broken never entered our heads. We were suffering very heavily. That we knew. Nothing like the shell fire had ever been heard before. Nobody realised how serious the situation must have been until the accounts were published.

Huggie, whom I have hitherto called T——, has a perfect mania for getting frightened; so one day, instead of leaving the routine matter that he carried at a place whence it might be forwarded at leisure, he rode along the Menin road to the Chateau at Hooge, the headquarters of the 15th Brigade. He came back quietly happy, telling us that he had had a good time, though the noise had been a little overwhelming. We learned afterwards that the enemy had been registering very accurately upon the Hooge road.

So the time passed without any excitement until November 23, when first we caught hold of a definite rumour that we should be granted leave. We existed in restless excitement until the 27th. On that great day we were told that we should be allowed a week's leave. We solemnly drew lots, and I drew the second batch. We left the Convent at Locre in a dream, and took up quarters at St Jans Cappel, two miles west of Bailleul. We hardly noticed that our billet was confined and uncomfortable. Certainly we never realised that we should stop there until the spring. The first batch went off hilariously, and with slow pace our day drew nearer and nearer.

III. ON LEAVE.

You may think it a little needless of me to write about my leave, if you do not remember that we despatch riders of the Fifth Division enlisted on or about August 6. Few then realised that England had gone to war. Nobody realised what sort of a war the war was going to be. When we returned in the beginning of December we were Martians. For three months we had been vividly soldiers. We had been fighting not in a savage country, but in a civilised country burnt by war; and it was because of this that the sights of war had struck us so fiercely, that when we came back our voyage in the good

ship *Archimedes* seemed so many years distant. Besides, if I were not to tell you of my leave it would make such a gap in my memories that I should scarcely know how to continue my tale. . . .

The week dragged more slowly than I can describe. Short-handed, we had plenty of work to do, but it was all routine work, which gave us too much time to think. There was also a crazy doubt of the others' return. They were due back a few hours before we started. If they fell ill or missed the boat . . . ! And the fools were motor-cycling to and from Boulogne!

On the great night we prepared some food for them, and having packed our kits, tried to sleep. As the hour drew near we listened excitedly for the noise of their engines. Several false alarms disturbed us: first, a despatch rider from the Third Division, and then another from the Corps. At last we heard the purr of three engines together, and then a moment later the faint rustle of others in the distance. We recognised the engines and jumped up. All the birds came home save one. George had never quite recovered from his riding exercises. Slight blood poisoning had set in. His leave had been extended at home. So poor "Tommy," who had joined us at Beuvry, was compelled to remain behind.

Violent question and answer for an hour, then we piled ourselves on our light lorry. Singing like angels we rattled into Bailleul. Just opposite Corps Headquarters, our old billet, we found a little crowd waiting. None of us could talk much for the excitement. We just wandered about greeting friends. I met again that stoutest of warriors, Mr Potter of the 15th Artillery Brigade, a friend of Festubert days. Then a battalion of French infantry marched through, gallant and cheerful men. At last the old dark-green buses rolled up, and about three in the morning we pounded off at a good fifteen miles an hour along the Cassel road.

Two of us sat on top, for it was a gorgeous night. We rattled over the *pavé* alongside multitudinous transport sleeping at the side of the road—through Meteren, through Caestre of pleasant memories, and south to Hazebrouck. Our driver was a man of mark, a racing motorist in times of peace. He left the other buses and swung along rapidly by himself. He slowed down for nothing. Just before Hazebrouck we caught up a French convoy. I do not quite know what happened. The Frenchmen took cover in one ditch. We swayed past, half in the other, at a good round pace. Waggons seemed to disappear under our wheels, and frightened horses plunged violently across the road. But we passed them without a scratch—to be stopped by the level-crossing at Hazebrouck. There we filled up with coffee and cognac, while the driver told us of his adventures in Antwerp.

We rumbled out of Hazebrouck towards St Omer. It was a clear dawn in splashes of pure colour. All the villages were peaceful, untouched by war. When we came to St Omer it was quite light. All the soldiers in the town looked amateurish. We could not make out what was the matter with them, until somebody noticed that their buttons shone. We drew up in the square, the happiest crew imaginable, but with a dignity such as befitted chosen N.C.O.'s and officers.

That was the first time I saw St Omer. When last I came to it I saw little, because I arrived in a motor-ambulance and left in a hospital-train.

The top of the bus was crowded, and we talked "shop" together. Sixth Division's having a pretty cushy time, what?—So you were at Mons! (in a tone of respect)—I don't mind their shells, and I don't mind their machine-guns, but their Minenwerfer are the frozen limit!—I suppose there's no chance of our missing the boat. Yes, it was a pretty fair scrap—Smith? He's gone. Silly fool, wanted to have a look round—Full of buck? Rather! Yes, heard there's a pretty good show on at the Frivolity—Beastly cold on top of this old wheezer.

It was, but none of us cared a scrap. We looked at the sign-posts that showed the distance to Boulogne, and then pretended that we had not seen them. Lurching and skidding and toiling we came to the top of the hill above Boulogne. With screaming brakes we rattled down to the harbour. That old sinner, Sergeant O'Connor, who was in charge of us corporals, made all arrangements efficiently. We embarked, and after a year of Sundays cast off.

There was a certain swell on, and Mr Potter, the bravest of men, grew greener and greener. My faith in mankind went.

We saw a dark line on the horizon.

"By Jove, there's England!" We all produced our field-glasses and looked through them very carefully for quite a long time.

"So it is. Funny old country"—a pause—"Makes one feel quite sentimental, just like the books. That's what we're fighting for, I suppose. Wouldn't fight for dirty old Dover! Wonder if they still charge you a penny for each sardine. I suppose we'll have to draw the blinds all the way up to London. Not a safe country by any means, far rather stop in the jolly old trenches."

"You'll get the white feather, old man."

"No pretty young thing would give it you. Why, you wouldn't look medically fit in mufti!"

"Fancy seeing a woman who isn't dirty and can talk one's own lingo!"

So we came to Folkestone, and all the people on the pier smiled at us. We scuttled ashore and shook ourselves for delight. There was a policeman, a postman. Who are these fussy fellows with badges

on their arms? Special constables, of course!

Spurning cigarettes and bovril we rushed to the bar. We all noticed the cleanness of the barmaid, her beauty, the neatness of her dress, her cultivated talk. We almost squabbled about what drinks we should have first. Finally, we divided into parties—the Beers and the Whisky-and-Sodas. Then there were English papers to buy, and, of course, we must have a luncheon-basket. . . .

The smell of the musty S.-E. & C. R. compartment was the scent of eastern roses. We sniffed with joy in the tunnels. We read all the notices with care. Nearing London we became silent. Quite disregarding the order to lower the blinds, we gazed from the bridge at a darkened London and the searchlight beams. Feverishly we packed our kit and stood up in the carriage. We jerked into the flare of Victoria. Dazzled and confused, we looked at the dense crowd of beaming, anxious people. There was a tug at my elbow, and a triumphant voice shouted—

"I've found him! Here he is! There's your Mother." . . .

This strange familiar country seemed to us clean, careless, and full of men. The streets were clean; the men and women were clean. Out in Flanders a little grime came as a matter of course. One's uniform was dirty. Well, it had seen service. There was no need to be particular about the set of the tunic and the exact way accoutrements should be put on. But here the few men in khaki sprinkled about the streets had their buttons cleaned and not a thing was out of place. We wondered which of them belonged to the New Armies. The women, too, were clean and beautiful. This sounds perhaps to you a foolish thing to say, but it is true. The Flemish woman is not so clean as she is painted, and as for women dressed with any attempt at fashionable display — we had seen none since August. Nadine at Dour had been neat; Hélène at Carlepont had been companionable; the pretty midinette at Maast had been friendly and not over-dirty. For a day or two after I returned to my own country I could not imagine how anybody ever could leave it.

And all the people were free from care. However cheerful those brave but irritating folk who live behind the line may be, they have always shadows in their eyes. We had never been to a village through which the Germans had not passed. Portly and hilarious the Teuton may have shown himself — kindly and well-behaved he undoubtedly was in many places — there came with him a terror which stayed after he had gone, just as a mist sways above the ground after the night has flown. At first we thought that no one at home cared about the war—then we realised it was impossible for

anybody to care about the war who had not seen war. People might be intensely interested in the course of operations. They might burn for their country's success, and flame out against those who threatened her. They might suffer torments of anxiety for a brother in danger, or the tortures of grief for a brother who had died. The Fact of war, the terror and the shame, the bestiality and the awful horror, the pity and the disgust — they could never *know* war. So we thought them careless.

Again, though we had been told very many had enlisted, the streets seemed ludicrously full of men. In the streets of Flanders there are women and children and old men and others. These others would give all that they had to put on uniform and march gravely or gaily to the trenches. In Flanders a man who is fit and wears no uniform is instantly suspected of espionage. I am grinding no axe. I am advocating nothing or attacking nothing. I am merely stating as a fact that, suspicious and contemptuous as we had been in Flanders of every able-bodied man who was not helping to defend his country, it seemed grotesque to us to find so many civilian men in the streets of the country to which we had returned.

Of the heavenly quietness and decency of life, of late breakfasts and later dinners, there is no need to tell, but even before the week was up unrest troubled us. The Division might go violently into action. The Germans might break through. The "old Div." would be wanting us, and we who felt towards the Division as others feel towards their Regiments were eager to get back. . . .

On the boat I met Gibson. At Boulogne we clambered into the same bus and passed the time in sipping old rum, eating chocolate biscuits, reading the second volume of 'Sinister Street,' and sleeping. At St Omer our craving for an omelette nearly lost us the bus. Then we slept. All that I can remember of the rest of the journey is that we stopped near Bailleul. An anxious corporal popped his head in.

"Mr Brown here?"

"Ye—e—s," sleepily, "what the devil do you want?"

"Our battery's in action, sir, a few miles from here. I've got your horses ready waiting, sir."

Mr Brown was thoroughly awake in a moment. He disturbed everybody collecting his kit. Then he vanished.

We were late at Bailleul, and there was no one to meet us. The cyclists as usual came to our help. Their gig was waiting, and climbing into it we drove furiously to St Jans Cappel. Making some sort of beds for ourselves, we fell asleep. When we woke up in the morning our leave was a dream.

IV. FIGHTING THROUGH THE WINTER.

Soon after our return there were rumours of a grand attack. Headquarters positively sizzled with the most expensive preparations. At a given word the Staff were to dash out in motor-cars to a disreputable tavern, so that they could see the shells bursting. A couple of despatch riders were to keep with them in order to fetch their cars when the day's work was over. A mobile reserve of motor-cyclists was to be established in a farm under cover.

The whole scheme was perfect. There was good rabbit-shooting near the tavern. The atmosphere inside was so thick that it actually induced slumber. The landlady possessed an excellent stove, upon which the Staff's lunch, prepared with quiet genius at St Jans, might be heated up. The place was dirty enough to give all those in authority, who might come round to see that the British Army was really doing something, a vivid conception of the horrors of war. And, as I have said, there was a slope behind the road from which lots and lots of shells could be seen bursting.

The word came. We arrived at the tavern before dawn. The Staff sauntered about outside in delicious anticipation. We all looked at our watches. Punctually at six the show began. Guns of all shapes and sizes had been concentrated. They made an overwhelming noise. Over the German trenches on the near slope of the Messines ridge flashed multitudinous points of flame. The Germans were being furiously shelled. The dawn came up while the Staff were drinking their matutinal tea. The Staff set itself sternly to work. Messages describing events at La Bassée poured in. They were conscientiously read and rushed over the wires to our brigades. The guns were making more noise than they had ever made before. The Germans were cowering in their trenches. It was all our officers could do to hold back their men, who were straining like hounds in a leash to get at the hated foe. A shell fell among some of the gunners' transport and wounded a man and two horses. That stiffened us. The news was flashed over the wire to G.H.Q. The transport was moved rapidly, but in good order, to a safer place. The guns fired more furiously than ever.

As soon as there was sufficient light, the general's A.D.C., crammed full of the lust for blood, went out and shot some rabbits and some indescribable birds, who by this time were petrified with fear. They had never heard such a noise before. That other despatch rider sat comfortably in a car, finished at his leisure the second volume of 'Sinister Street,' and wrote

a lurid description of a modern battle.

Before the visitors came, the scene was improved by the construction of a large dug-out near the tavern. It is true that if the Staff had taken to the dug-out they would most certainly have been drowned. That did not matter. Every well-behaved Divisional Staff must have a dug-out near its Advanced Headquarters. It is always "done."

Never was a Division so lucky in its visitors. A certain young prince of high lineage arrived. Everybody saluted at the same time. He was, I think, duly impressed by the atmosphere of the tavern, the sight of the Staff's maps, the inundated dug-outs, the noise of the guns and the funny balls of smoke that the shells made when they exploded over the German lines.

What gave this battle a humorous twist for all time was the delectable visit of a Cabinet Minister. He came in a car and brought with him his own knife and fork and a loaf of bread as his contribution to the Divisional Lunch. When he entered the tavern he smelt among other smells the delicious odour of rabbit-pie. With hurried but charming condescension he left his loaf on the stove, where it dried for a day or two until the landlady had the temerity to appropriate it. He was fed, so far as I remember, on—

Soup.
Fish.
Rabbit-pie. Potatoes. Cabbage.
Apple-tart.
Fruit. Coffee. Liqueurs.

and after lunch, I am told, showed a marked disinclination to ascend the hill and watch the shells bursting. He was only a "civvy."[1]

The battle lasted about ten days. Each morning the Staff, like lazy men who are "something in the city," arrived a little later at the tavern. Each afternoon they departed a little earlier. The rabbits decreased in number, and finally, when two days running the A.D.C. had been able to shoot nothing at all, the Division returned for good to the Chateau at St Jans Cappel.

For this mercy the despatch riders were truly grateful. Sitting the whole day in the tavern, we had all contracted bad headaches. Even chess, the 'Red Magazine,' and the writing of letters, could do nothing to dissipate our unutterable boredom. Never did we pass that tavern afterwards without a shudder of disgust. With joyous content we heard a month or two later that it had been closed for providing drinks after hours.

Officially the grand attack had taken this course. The French to the north had been held up by the unexpected strength of the German defence. The 3rd Division on our immediate left had advanced a trifle, for the Gordons

[1] The soldier's contemptuous expression for the inhabitants of the civilian world.

had made a perilous charge into the Petit Bois, a wood at the bottom of the Wytschaete Heights. The Germans in front of our Division were so cowed by our magniloquent display of gunnery that they have remained moderately quiet ever since.

After these December manœuvres nothing of importance happened on our front until the spring, when the Germans, whom we had tickled with intermittent gunnery right through the winter, began to retaliate with a certain energy.

The Division that has no history is not necessarily happy. There were portions of the line, it is true, which provided a great deal of comfort and very little danger. Fine dug-outs were constructed—you have probably seen them in the illustrated papers. The men were more at home in such trenches than in the ramshackle farms behind the lines. These show trenches were emphatically the exception. The average trench on the line during last winter was neither comfortable nor safe. Yellow clay, six inches to four feet or more of stinking water, many corpses behind the trenches buried just underneath the surface-crust, and in front of the trenches not buried at all, inveterate sniping from a slightly superior position—these are not pleasant bedfellows. The old Division (or rather the new Division—the infantrymen of the old Division were now pitifully few) worked right hard through the winter. When the early spring came and the trenches were dry, the Division was sent north to bear a hand in the two bloodiest actions of the war. So far as I know, in the whole history of British participation in this war there has never been a more murderous fight than one of these two actions—and the Division, with slight outside help, managed the whole affair.

Twice in the winter there was an attempted *rapprochement* between the Germans and ourselves. The more famous gave the Division a mention by "Eyewitness," so we all became swollen with pride. On the Kaiser's birthday one-and-twenty large shells were dropped accurately into a farm suspected of being a battalion or brigade headquarters. The farm promptly acknowledged the compliment by blowing up, and all round it little explosions followed. Nothing pleases a gunner more than to strike a magazine. He always swears he knew it was there the whole time, and, as gunners are dangerous people to quarrel with, we always pretended to believe the tale.

There are many people in England still who cannot stomach the story of the Christmas truce. "Out there," we cannot understand why. Good fighting men respect good fighting men. On our front, and on the fronts of other divisions, the Germans had behaved throughout the winter with a passable gentlemanliness. Besides, neither the British nor the German soldier

—with the possible exception of the Prussians — has been able to stoke up that virulent hate which devastates so many German and British homes. A certain lance-corporal puts the matter thus:[1] —

"We're fightin' for somethink what we've got. Those poor beggars is fightin' 'cos they've got to. An' old Bill Kayser 's fightin' for somethin' what 'e'll never get. But 'e will get somethink, and that's a good 'iding!"[2]

We even had a sneaking regard for that "cunning old bird, Kayser Bill." Our treatment of prisoners explains the Christmas Truce. The British soldier, except when he is smarting under some dirty trick, suffering under terrible loss, or maddened by fighting or fatigue, treats his prisoners with a tolerant, rather contemptuous kindness. May God in His mercy help any poor German who falls into the hands of a British soldier when the said German has "done the dirty" or has "turned nasty"! There is no judge so remorseless, no executioner so ingenious in making the punishment fit the crime.

This is what I wrote home a day or two after Christmas:— From six on Christmas Eve to six in the evening on Christmas Day there was a truce between two regiments of our Division and the Germans opposite them. Heads popped up and were not sniped. Greetings were called across. One venturesome, enthusiastic German got out of his trench and stood waving a branch of Christmas Tree. Soon there was a fine pow-wow going on. Cigars were exchanged for tobacco. Friendship was pledged in socks. The Germans brought out some beer and the English some rum. Finally, on Christmas Day, there was a great concert and dance. The Germans were spruce, elderly men, keen and well fed, with buttons cleaned for the occasion. They appeared to have plenty of supplies, and were fully equipped with everything necessary for a winter campaign. A third battalion, wisely but churlishly, refused these seasonable advances, and shot four men who appeared with a large cask of what was later discovered to be beer. . . .

At last the spring came and the Division was sent to the slaughter.

V. LIFE AT ST JANS CAPPEL.

"The Div." were billeted in a chateau on the slope of a hill three-quarters of a mile above St Jans Cappel. This desirable residence stands in two acres of garden, just off

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[1] I retired with some haste from Flanders the night after the Germans first began to use gas. Militant chemistry may have altered the British soldier's convictions.

[2] I have left out the usual monotonous epithet. Any soldier can supply it.

the road. At the gate was a lodge. Throughout the winter we despatch riders lived in two small rooms of this lodge. We averaged fourteen in number. Two were out with the brigades, leaving twelve to live, eat, and sleep in two rooms, each about 15 ft. by 8 ft. We were distinctly cramped, and cursed the day that had brought us to St Jans. It was a cruel stroke that gave us for our winter quarters the worst billets we had ever suffered.

As we became inclined to breakfast late, nine o'clock parade was instituted. Breakfast took place before or after, as the spirit listed. Bacon, tea, and bread came from the cook. We added porridge and occasionally eggs. The porridge we half-cooked the night before.

After breakfast we began to clean our bicycles, no light task, and the artificers started on repairs. The cleaning process was usually broken into by the arrival of the post and the papers of the day before. Cleaning the bicycles, sweeping out the rooms, reading and writing letters, brought us to dinner at 1.

This consisted of bully or fresh meat stew with vegetables (or occasionally roast or fried meat), bread and jam. As we became more luxurious we would provide for ourselves Yorkshire pudding, which we discovered trying to make pancakes, and pancakes, which we discovered trying to make Yorkshire pudding. Worcester Sauce and the invaluable curry powder were never wanting. After dinner we smoked a lethargic pipe.

In the afternoon it was customary to take some exercise. To reduce the strain on our back tyres we used to trudge manfully down into the village, or, if we were feeling energetic, to the ammunition column a couple of miles away. Any distance over two miles we covered on motor-cycles. Their use demoralised us. Our legs shrunk away.

Sometimes two or three of us would ride to a sand-pit on Mont Noir and blaze away with our revolvers. Incidentally, not one of us had fired a shot in anger since the war began. We treated our revolvers as unnecessary luggage. In time we became skilled in their use, and thereafter learnt to keep them moderately clean. We had been served out with revolvers at Chatham, but had never practised with them—except at Carlow for a morning, and then we were suffering from the effects of inoculation. They may be useful when we get to Germany.

Shopping in Bailleul was less strenuous. We were always buying something for supper—a kilo of liver, some onions, a few sausages—anything that could be cooked by the unskilled on a paraffin-stove. Then after shopping there were cafés we could drop into, sure of a welcome. It was impossible to live from November to March "within easy reach of town" and not make friends.

Milk for tea came from the farm in which No. 1 Section

of the Signal Company was billeted. When first we were quartered at St Jans this section wallowed in some mud a little above the chateau. Because I had managed to make myself understood to some German prisoners, I was looked upon as a great linguist, and vulgarly credited with a knowledge of all the European languages. So I was sent, together with the Quartermaster-Sergeant and the Sergeant-Major, on billeting expeditions. Arranging for quarters at the farm, I made great friends with the farmer. He was a tall, thin, lithe old man, with a crumpled wife and prodigiously large family. He was a man of affairs, too, for once a month in peace time he would drive into Hazebrouck. While his wife got me the milk, we used to sit by the fire and smoke our pipes and discuss the terrible war and the newspapers. One of the most embarrassing moments I have ever experienced was when he bade me tell the sergeants that he regarded them as brothers, and loved them all. I said it first in French, that he might hear, and then in English. The sergeants blushed, while the old man beamed.

We loved the Flemish, and, for the most part, they loved us. When British soldiers arrived in a village the men became clean, the women smart, and the boys inevitably procured putties and wore them with pride. The British soldier is certainly not insular. He tries hard to understand the words and ways of his neighbours. He has a rough tact, a crude courtesy, and a great-hearted generosity. In theory no task could be more difficult than the administration of the British Area. Even a friendly military occupation is an uncomfortable burden. Yet never have I known any case of real ill-feeling. Personally, during my nine months at the Front, I have always received from the French and the Belgians amazing kindness and consideration. As an officer I came into contact with village and town officials over questions of billets and requisitions. In any difficulty I received courteous assistance. No trouble was too great; no time was too valuable. . . .

After tea of cakes and rolls the bridge-players settled down to a quiet game, with pipes to hand and whisky and siphons on the sideboard. We took it in turns to cook some delicacy for supper at 8 — sausages, curried sardines, liver and bacon, or—rarely but joyously —fish. At one time or another we feasted on all the luxuries, but fish was rarer than rubies. When we had it we did not care if we stank out the whole lodge with odours of its frying. We would lie down to sleep content in a thick fishy, paraffin-y, dripping-y atmosphere. When I came home I could not think what the delicious smell was in a certain street. Then my imagination struck out a picture — Grimers laboriously frying a dab over a smoky paraffin-stove.

On occasions after supper we

would brew a large jorum of good rum-punch, sing songs with roaring choruses, and finish up the evening with a good old scrap over somebody else's bed. The word went round to "mobilise," and we would all stand ready, each on his bed, to repel boarders. If the sanctity of your bed were violated, the intruder would be cast vigorously into outer darkness. Another song, another drink, a final pipe, and to bed.

Our Christmas would have been a grand day if it had not been away from home.

At eight o'clock there was breakfast of porridge, bacon and eggs, and bloaters—everybody in the best of spirits. About nine the Skipper presented us with cards from the King and Queen. Then the mail came in, but it was poor. By the time we had tidied up our places and done a special Christmas shave and wash, we were called upon to go down to the cookhouse and sign for Princess Mary's Christmas gift—a good pipe, and in a pleasant little brass box lay a Christmas card, a photograph, a packet of cigarettes, and another of excellent tobacco.

It was now lunch-time—steak and potatoes.

The afternoon was spent on preparations for our great and unexampled dinner. Grimers printed the menu, and while I made some cold curried sardines, the rest went down into the village to stimulate the landlady of the inn where we were going to dine.

In the village a brigade was billeted, and that brigade was, of course, "on the wire." It was arranged that the despatch riders next on the list should take their motor-cycles down and be summoned over the wire if they were needed. An order had come round that unimportant messages were to be kept until the morning.

We dined in the large kitchen of the *Maison Commune Estaminet*, at a long table decorated with mistletoe and holly. The dinner—the result of two days' "scrounging" under the direction of George—was too good to be true. We toasted each other and sang all the songs we knew. Two of the Staff clerks wandered in and told us we were the best of all possible despatch riders. We drank to them uproariously. Then a Scotsman turned up with a noisy recitation. Finally, we all strolled home up the hill singing loudly and pleasantly, very exhilarated, in sure and certain belief we had spent the best of all possible evenings.

In the dwelling of the Staff there was noise of revelry. Respectable captains with false noses peered out of windows. Our Fat Boy declaimed in the signal office on the iniquities of the artillery telegraphists. Sadders sent gentle messages of greeting over the wires. He was still a little piqued at his failure to secure the piper of the K.O.S.B., who had been commandeered by the Staff. Sadders waited for him until early morning and then steered him to our lodge, but the piper was by then too tired to play.

Here is our bill of fare:—

CHRISTMAS 1914.

DINNER

OF THE

TEN SURVIVING MOTOR-CYCLISTS OF THE FAMOUS FIFTH DIVISION.

Sardins très Moutard.
Potage.
Dindon Rôti-Saucisses. Oise Rôti.
Petits Choux de Bruxelles.
Pommes de Terre.
Pouding de Noël Rhum.
Dessert. Café. Liqueurs.
Vins.—Champagne. Moselle. Port.
Benedictine. Whisky.

On the reverse page we put our battle-honours—Mons, Le Cateau, Crêpy-en-Valois, the Marne, the Aisne, La Bassée, the Defence of Ypres.[1]

We beat the Staff on the sprouts, but the Staff countered by appropriating the piper.

Work dwindled until it became a farce. One run for each despatch rider every third day was the average. St Jans was not the place we should have chosen for a winter resort. Life became monotonous, and we all with one accord began applying for commissions. Various means were used to break the monotony. Grimers, under the Skipper's instructions, began to plant vegetables for the spring, but I do not think he ever got much beyond mustard and cress. On particularly unpleasant days we were told off to make fascines. N'Soon assisted the Quartermaster-Sergeant. Cecil did vague things with the motor-lorry. I was called upon to write the Company's War Diary. Even the Staff became restless and took to night-walks behind the trenches. If it had not been for the generous supply of "days off" that the Skipper allowed us, we should by February have begun to gibber.

Despatches were of two kinds —ordinary and priority. "Priority" despatches could only be sent by the more important members of the Staff. They were supposed to be important, were marked "priority" in the corner, and taken at once in a hurry. Ordinary despatches went by the morning and evening posts. During the winter a regular system of motor-cyclist posts was organised right through the British Area. A message could be sent from Neuve Eglise to Chartres in about two days. Our posts formed the first or last stage of the journey. The morning post left at 7.30 A.M., and the evening at 3.30 P.M. All the units of the division were visited.

If the roads were moderately good and no great movements of troops were proceeding, the post took about 1¼ hours; so the miserable postman was late either for breakfast or for tea. It was routine work pure and simple. After six weeks we knew every stone in the roads. The postman never came under fire. He passed through one village which was occasionally shelled, but, while I was with the Signal Company,

[1] To these may now be added—St Eloi, Hill 60, the Second Battle of Ypres.

the postman and the shells never arrived at the village at the same time. There was far more danger from lorries and motor ambulances than from shells. As for the long line of "postmen" that stretched back into the dim interior of France —it was rarely that they even heard the guns. When they did hear them, they would, I am afraid, pluck a racing helmet from their pockets, draw the ear-flaps well down over their ears, bend down over their racing handle-bars, and sprint for dear life. Returning safely to Abbéville, they would write hair-raising accounts of the dangers they had passed through to the motor-cycling papers. It is only right that I should here once and for all confess—there is no finer teller of tall stories than the motor-cyclist despatch rider. . . .

From December to February the only time I was under shell fire was late in December, when the Grand Attack was in full train. A certain brigade headquarters had taken refuge inconsiderately in advanced dug-outs. As I passed along the road to them some shrapnel was bursting a quarter of a mile away. So long was it since I had been under fire that the noise of our own guns disturbed me. In the spring, after I had left the Signal Company, the roads were not so healthy. George experienced the delights of a broken chain on a road upon which the Germans were registering accurately with shrapnel. Church, a fine fellow, and quite the most promising of our recruits, was killed in his billet by a shell when attached to a brigade.

Taking the post rarely meant just a pleasant spin, because it rained in Flanders from September to January.

One day I started out from D.H.Q. at 3.30 P.M. with the afternoon post, and reached the First Brigade well up to time. Then it began to rain, at first slightly, and then very heavily indeed, with a bagful of wind. On a particularly open stretch of road—the rain was stinging sharply—the engine stopped. With a heroic effort I tugged the bicycle through some mud to the side of a shed, in the hope that when the wind changed—it did not—I might be under cover. I could not see. I could not grip—and of course I could not find out what the matter was.

After I had been working for about half an hour the two artillery motor-cyclists came along. I stopped them to give me a hand and to do as much work as I could possibly avoid doing myself while preserving an appearance of omniscience.

We worked for an hour or more. It was now so dark that I could not distinguish one motor-cyclist from another. The rain rained faster than it had ever rained before, and the gale was so violent that we could scarcely keep our feet. Finally, we diagnosed a complaint that could not be cured by the roadside. So we stopped working, to curse and admire the German rockets.

There was an estaminet close

by. It had appeared shut, but when we began to curse a light shone in one of the windows. So I went in and settled to take one of the artillery motor-cycles and deliver the rest of my quite unimportant despatches. It would not start. We worked for twenty minutes in the rain vainly, then a motor-cyclist turned up from the nearest brigade to see what had become of me,—the progress of the post is checked over the wire. We arranged matters—but then neither his motor-cycle nor the motor-cycle of the second artillery motor-cyclist would start. It was laughable. Eventually we got the brigade despatch rider started with my report.

A fifth motor-cyclist, who discreetly did not stop his engine, took my despatches back to "the Div." The second artillery motor-cycle we started after quarter of an hour's prodigious labour. The first and mine were still obstinate, so he and I retired to the inn, drank brandy and hot water, and conversed amiably with madame.

Madame, who together with innumerable old men and children inhabited the inn, was young and pretty and intelligent—black hair, sallow and symmetrical face, expressive mouth, slim and graceful limbs. Talking the language, we endeavoured to make our forced company pleasant. That other despatch rider, still steaming from the stove, sat beside a charming Flemish woman, and endeavoured, amid shrieks of laughter, to translate the jokes in an old number of 'London Opinion.'

A Welsh lad came in—a perfect Celt of nineteen, dark and lithe, with a momentary smile and a wild desire to see India. Then some Cheshires arrived. They were soaked and very weary. One old reservist staggered to a chair. We gave him some brandy and hot water. He chattered unintelligibly for a moment about his wife and children. He began to doze, so his companion took him out, and they tottered along after their company.

A dog of no possible breed belonged to the estaminet. Madame called him "Automobile Anglais," because he was always rushing about aimlessly for no conceivable reason.

We were sorry when at 9.50 the lorry came for the bicycles. Our second driver was an ex-London cabby, with a crude wit expressed in impossible French that our hostess delightfully parried. On the way back he told me how he had given up the three taxis he had owned to do "his bit," how the other men had laughed at him because he was so old, how he had met a prisoner who used to whistle for the taxis in Russell Square. We talked also of the men in the trenches, of fright, and of the end of the war. We reached D.H.Q. about 10.30, and after a large bowl of porridge I turned in.

(*To be concluded.*)

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

THE GARRULITY OF POLITICIANS—THE EXAMPLE OF SILENCE—LORD HALDANE AGAIN—AN "ARCHITECT OF EMPIRE"—A POLICY OF THRIFT, PRIVATE AND PUBLIC—THE EXTRAVAGANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT—PROFESSOR MURRAY'S SIGNATURE—HIS DEFENCE OF MESSRS BRAILSFORD AND RUSSELL—A HYPOTHETICAL CASE.

At this, the supreme, crisis of the nation's fate the politicians still remain far remote from reality. They do not understand the settled contempt in which a great part of the country holds them and their garrulity. They have lived so long upon words that they cannot adjust themselves to the imperious necessity of deeds. For ten years they have listened only to the flattering voice of the caucus; they have known no more than the will of the voter, who when driven with his fellows to the polling-booth falls below the level of humanity, and ceasing to be a man and a citizen becomes a mere receptacle for falsehood and cant-phrases. To-day the voter has ceased to exist; he is the first thing that is flung into the purifying crucible of war, and it is high time that the politician followed his dupe into nothingness.

At the beginning of the war we were bidden imperiously to put an end to party strife and to trust the Government. And the whole country would have been willing to obey the word of command, if only the Government had trusted itself. We all recognise the truth, spoken by Sir John Simon the other day, that "this war will not be won by criticising; it will be won by resolutely avoiding all sterile controversies." But this is a truth which Sir John Simon and his Radical colleagues resolutely refuse to admit. They cannot leave the past alone; they worry it as a dog worries a bone. They cannot avoid sterile controversies. Sir John Simon himself, having uttered a few respectable platitudes, falls easily into the pit of disputation. "Democracy," says he, "is on its trial, and its opponent is despotism. Democracy is at death-grips with tyranny." If by democracy Sir John Simon means what Sir Henry Maine means by the word—a form of government, no more and no less—then he has been talking the kind of nonsense which cannot be acceptable to at least one of our Allies. We are fighting against one autocracy—that is true; it is also true that we are fighting side by side with another autocracy; and it is not the moment for Sir John Simon to revive the worn-out superstition that democracy is a system sent straight from heaven upon earth. One thing the war has already made abundantly clear, which is

that a democracy like ours, which exhausts its activities in the barren hunt for votes, cannot undertake the simple duty of defence. There it has been tried and found wanting. And it will presently be proved, when we have emerged victorious from our struggle with Germany, that we have won the battle, not on account of the democracy whose praises have been pompously sung upon a thousand fusty platforms, but in its despite.

The fact that Sir John Simon entirely misses the point of his own speech proves how dangerous a thing is unlicensed speech in the hour of national danger. He, at any rate, is restrained from pandering to the party by some scruple of patriotism. Not even his ambition to follow Mr Asquith, as that most perilous of adventurers, a lawyer-prime-minister, wholly befogs his judgment. Would that we could say the same of all the Radical demagogues! Here, for instance, is Mr Hobhouse, once a Cabinet Minister, whose one contribution to the golden book of eloquence is the statement, still remembered, that Lord Roberts was an elderly gentleman who had outlived his sphere of usefulness. For him, in his retirement, the occasion is far too good to be lost. He has been discoursing to his constituents, whom he assured that to force a system of conscription upon England would be not an error but a crime. The greatest crime that England could commit to-day would be to sacrifice one jot of her strength to the silly cry of a silly party. If conscription could add one ounce to our effectiveness—and we have not the slightest doubt that it would — it should be introduced to-day. It is not our business just now to illustrate a theory of politics or to collect the suffrages of the idle and thriftless, of men fit for nothing but to vote. It is our business to aid our Allies, whose faith in universal service has never been shaken, to beat the Germans. Nor are Mr Hobhouse and his fellows paying a high compliment to France when they describe conscription as a "crime." To assume a profound difference in this matter between French and English is to show a complete ignorance of two nations, and the progress of the war should have proved even to those unwilling to learn that there is no virtue of courage in the volunteer which the conscript does not possess in equal measure.

But by far the worst offender of them all is Viscount Haldane of Cloan. No discomfiture seems to stem the torrent of his speech. Whatever happens, he must still be talking. If the House of Lords prove an impatient audience, he must needs call a meeting at the National Liberal Club that he may regale the stalwarts with the *crambe repetita* of his own justification. He does not, and cannot, plead the one single excuse for talk which should seem acceptable to-day: that the words spoken may aid the Government and the country in their great work

of beating the Germans. He is interested only in his own exploits, his own grievances. He goes round and round like a squirrel in a cage. He pours forth the same old phrases; he bombasts his speech with the same old boasts. He brags once more, as he has bragged many times in the last ten years, of his "hard thinking." He assured his packed and sympathetic audience that we could not have been better prepared so far as the army was concerned, a preposterous statement which shows at what a feather's weight Lord Haldane valued the judgment and knowledge of his audience. In brief, he cried aloud, as loud as he could, that he and his colleagues were the only wise men in "an unreflecting nation." He did more than this: he admits that he "did all he could to make friendly speeches," because he knew that Germany was encouraging a wholly false superstition of England's hostility. A pretty admission for a responsible Minister to make in a free and great country! And then, having coldly witnessed the destruction of munition-plants, having belonged to a Government which bought no guns and stored no rifles, Lord Haldane throws the whole blame of an inevitable shortage upon the difficulties which arose between labour and capital. When the war is over we devoutly pray that the responsibility for an infamous neglect shall be affixed to the right shoulders, that the men who condescended to receive salaries from the country, and who did not find it profitable in their constituencies to put that country in a proper state of defence, shall be as severely punished as they deserve. Meanwhile, it is enough to record that Mr Lloyd George has denounced Lord Haldane's statement as "incomplete and in some material respects inaccurate," and has pointed out "that the very fact of this conflict of memory having arisen shows the unwisdom of these partial and unauthorised disclosures of highly confidential committees of the Cabinet." A well-merited rebuke, sternly administered, which is not likely to curb Lord Haldane's tongue or to diminish his self-esteem.

The fact is that the Radicals have never got over the triumph of 1906. They still believe themselves the sole repositories of wisdom and truth. In that year they were one and all intoxicated with a surfeit of votes, and they have never got sober again. They will not realise that to-day they count in the country as no better than cyphers. They must needs speak with the old voice, and assume as much as they can of the old confidence. And nobody wishes to hear them. They have contradicted themselves and one another so often that it is not easy or prudent to believe a word that they say. They forget that with an enemy battering at the door they can no longer play the game of politics, which once was their solace and their profit: it is a time for candour, not for the

old deceptions; and the sooner our demagogues discover this simple truth the sooner will they take refuge in silence.

And of them all none has been more indiscreet than Mr Churchill. Never since the war began has he made a single speech which was designed merely to hearten the country. His professions are admirable. "Criticism," says he, "when it is dictated in time of war, as it always should be, only by the most sincere desire to be of service and of help, and is absolutely free from any taint of personal malice or of prejudice or of ulterior motive, may find its place if governed by due restraint and a sense of responsibility." Wise words! Yet we remember speeches not a few delivered by Mr Churchill during the past year in which "due restraint" and "a sense of responsibility" have been pitifully lacking. Nor can we get much comfort from Mr Churchill's excellent copy-heading, "Let discord die." By all means let discord die, but do not let us receive this admonition from the father of discord. We are tired of the spectacle of the devil reproving sin. It cannot escape the least observant that Mr Churchill has lived upon discord for ten years. It has been the very air he breathed. A friend and admirer of his once said that the cleverest thing ever done was Mr Churchill's stirring up of class hatred in the country. It was clever indeed! It must have increased Mr Churchill's majority, and added to the Radical majority many an ill-won seat. But class hatred was not stirred up in the cause of concord; and as it is the bane of demagogues that they are powerless to allay the fury which it suits them to excite, it is largely the fault of Mr Churchill, who to-day with uplifted hands deplores discord, that the country has been for years and still remains in a bad temper. We do not wish to discuss the strike in South Wales. That is a national disgrace, eternal and indelible. Yet we cannot put all the blame upon the miners. We remember the cleverest thing ever done, and shall be able presently to apportion the responsibility for a crime which no Englishman can contemplate without a burning sense of shame.

When, therefore, we are told that criticism must cease in the country, we would reply: Que Messieurs les assassins commencent. So long as demagogues, like Lord Haldane and Mr Churchill, find themselves unable to cease from chattering, so long will it be the duty of all patriots to point out that their arguments rest upon no other basis than a supreme selfishness. Mr Asquith has always been a bad disciplinarian,—that is notorious; but surely in this grave crisis he might bestir himself to impose restraint upon his colleagues. They cannot open their lips without indiscretion. And say what they will, they can never dissociate themselves from their past. A few speakers there are to

whom we shall always listen with respect and attention. When Lord Kitchener takes the country into his confidence, he is sure of a sympathetic audience, because he speaks not as a politician but as a soldier. He has no electoral campaign to live down; his sincerity is never for a moment in doubt; and we all know that he is inspired by one hope only—to beat the Germans. Nor will Mr Balfour ever open his lips in vain. Upon him, if upon any statesman, has fallen the mantle of William Pitt. He, more felicitously than any other, can find the words and express the sentiments which shall strengthen the resolution and inflame the courage of Englishmen. When he unveiled a bust of Mr Chamberlain, when he painted in glowing colours the splendid services of a great statesman, he said nothing in his eulogy that was not pertinent to the titanic struggle in which we and the Dominions oversea are engaged. And he made it clear that foresight and imagination are the very essence of statesmanship. Many men have put their hands to the building up of our Empire. The pioneers, driven abroad by the spirit of adventure, laid the foundations with their bones. The loyal men who followed them raised still higher the noble edifice. But it was Mr Chamberlain, a statesman who thought always not of himself but of his country, who gave the Dominions, which make up our Empire, a common thought, a common ambition. The Dominions, as we all know, were organised for peace. It is evident after the events of the past years that they may be organised for war also. And the reason of union is no mere advantage of commerce or profit. It has been proved conclusively, as Mr Balfour said, "that the spiritual bonds which unite the most distant parts of the Empire to this its centre have grown in our growth and strengthened in our strength, that the wisdom of statesmen has gone to the building of it, and the patriotism of individuals." Of these statesmen the foremost is Joseph Chamberlain, "the architect of Empire," and we can only regret that he is not here in the full possession of his energy and courage to prove that a dictator is the only adequate government for a selfish and undisciplined people.

And the same rule of silence which we would impose upon the late Ministers we would impose also upon the rank and file of the House of Commons. These gentlemen are in the receipt of comfortable incomes for doing nothing whatever, and they should be permitted to retain them only on the principle on which a noisy organ-grinder gets a penny—that they should go and play in another street. At Westminster they are not merely in the way: they are dangerous. By asking infamous questions and by suggesting the wrong answers, they are doing a definite service to the enemy; and if they were not earning their

salaries before, at what price shall we estimate the work which they are doing to-day? The one possible course which the House of Commons can adopt, with credit to itself and safety to the country, is to adjourn, as patriots enlist, for the period of the war. Whether we shall ever return to the trivialities of Parliamentary Government, after several millions of our citizens have faced death and wounds, is uncertain. We need not anticipate the future. But at least we may see to it that the House of Commons should be deprived for the present of all power of mischief.

In other words, we are content to trust our Ministers, if only they will show themselves resolute in action, and give us a plain assurance that they have put all the shifts and tricks of politics behind them. We want to know that no one of them is helping to conduct the war with one eye cast upon the electorate, that all desire of popularity is expelled rigidly from their minds, that they will speak no word either in the House or in the constituencies which can be construed into a plea of justification or an attempt to get the better of a colleague. There must be no more oratory in the National Liberal Club; there must be no more letters of eulogy composed by the Prime Minister—letters which persuade us either that the Prime Minister is not speaking the truth, or that he has treated his oldest friend and comrade with the grossest injustice. It is idle for our leaders to demand of others what they refuse to do themselves, and if all criticism is to cease, the cessation must begin at the top. The country asks nothing better than to be led, but it must be led with courage and firmness by men who are willing to see their private interests merged for ever in the common good.

And the Government has set an evil example not only in the sphere of criticism. In the sphere of economy also its practice falls far below its precept. It sends broadcast over the country the simple message that "silver bullets will win the war." It reminds the citizens that they "must save in every possible way for their country's sake as well as for their own good." It tells us with perfect truth that we must do our best to avoid buying the productions of foreign countries, that we must be sparing of food, that we must save all the money we can and invest our surplus, however small it may be, in the War Loan. Its advice is excellent; it speaks with the voice of wisdom herself, and we hope earnestly that the whole country will listen attentively when it speaks. The vast sum invested in the War Loan measures at once the patriotism and wealth of the country. But other loans will follow this one, and the Government will be in a far better position to demand the country's help—if at the same time it proves by its own action that its love of economy is something more

than the mere expression of a pious and academic opinion.

The need for economy is taken for granted. Not merely are we spending upon the war £2083 a minute, but we shall emerge victorious with empty pockets and such a burden of debt as we have never before been asked to shoulder. Mr Harold Cox has estimated that when the peace is signed we should "start with something like £130,000,000 over our last peace expenditure." And since money will be scarce and labour cheap, we shall be in a worse position than ever we were to meet the payment of the annual bill. It is plain, therefore, that economy must be imposed not only upon the citizen but on the State. In the last ten years, by a silent revolution, we have been turned into a vast and well-paid bureaucracy. The Radicals have invented new departments and fresh systems of expenditure, mainly for the purpose of securing votes and of making themselves tenants for life of the Government and its profitable offices. They have thrown other people's money about with a reckless extravagance, which must now cease. In a dozen directions retrenchment is easy. The members of the Commons' House share between them £250,000 a year, and they do work which would be very dear at £1 a week per head. That they should be paid at all is ridiculous, especially as there have always been hundreds of persons able and willing to discharge such duties as are laid upon them for nothing. They voted themselves £400 a year apiece without discussion, and for no better reason than to help Mr Asquith to hold together a disjointed coalition. That reason is revealed to-day for the absurdity that it always was. The old coalition is dispersed, and is not likely ever to be gathered together again. The members of Parliament themselves, who did nothing to warn the country of the danger that threatened it, look very much like men who have taken money under false pretences, and clearly in war-time the less they say and do the better. Here, then, is a first opportunity to economise, and we shall believe more firmly in the professions of the Government when we hear that the payment of members is abolished, than we do to-day. We know that difficulties stand in the way of this obvious reform. The game of politics has seemed in the past to be a kind of circus. It has brought a spice of excitement into dull places. The foolish metaphors, borrowed from the battlefield, with which the aspiring candidates beguiled their dupes, gave the false impression that a real fight was going on, and that the heroes who were risking no more than a seat in the House of Commons were ready to shed their blood for something or other. And so the country, until the picture-palace came as a rival, was beginning to look upon politicians as far greater and better men than they were—and the politicians

themselves, having control of the purse-strings, gladly accepted the popular opinion. They thought that no pay was too high for them, no pensions too great; and it is a significant fact that in this year of war, £1200 a year has been granted to a retired politician who presided for a few years over the department of Education. Had Mr Pease been a statesman—and not even the enthusiasm of partisans would claim statesmanship for him—he should not thus be rewarded at a time when national service means far more than discovering a policy which will sound well on the hustings. How many soldiers, we wonder, will retire at the end of the war with Mr Pease's comfortable competence? If you weigh Mr Pease in the balance against a general, he is naught. But he has the facile talent which the House of Commons understands, and is rewarded as far beyond his merits as beyond the comprehension of simple folk.

In the House of Commons itself, then, there is ample space for economy. The men who vote salaries and pensions to themselves are obviously unfitted, unless they reform their characters and habits, to preach to others the gospel of thrift. And it is not only upon themselves that they have squandered the wealth of the country. That they might provide places for their friends and votes for themselves they have doubled the expenses of the Civil Service. By no casuistry can they defend the extravagance with which they are attempting to discover what nobody cares to know, and what the courts have told them it is illegal to inquire—the site values of 1909. The operation is costly; they spend some £700,000 a year on it; the resulting profit is trumpery—a poor £50,000; and it is not true, as the officials tell us, that the inquiry has helped to increase the legacy duties. Moreover, the business was devised in malice, and carried out in spite. It was the first manœuvre in Mr George's campaign of robbing one class to purchase the votes of another, of stirring up by every artifice of malignity the poor against the rich! Yet the Government which preaches economy will not take any steps to avoid this waste of £700,000. And the reason of its refusal is plain: it remembers with an undeserved pride the ridiculous things which it said about Mr George's budget—about the Dreadnoughts that it was going to purchase, and the old age pensions which it was going to pay by the mere expedient of investigating site values. But this is not a time for salving wounded vanity. The scheme of valuation costs £700,000 a year, and it engrosses the energies of an army of sprightly, ignorant young surveyors, who should be sent straightway into the trenches, and thus to justify their own existence and to save the country from a wanton piece of wastefulness.

And if the Government will give a lead, we believe that

the municipalities would follow that lead. If it is to be a policy of thrift, let it be thrift all round. So long as the war lasts, we want no extravagance in grandiose schemes of local policy. We must carry on the necessary business of the country, and we must do no more. This is not a time to build elementary schools on such a scale of comfort and efficiency as Eton is never likely to claim or to expect. This is not a time to perfect roads and to make experiments in municipal architecture. Let us instead remember the "silver bullet," which is no less efficient because it comes out of the public than out of a private pocket.

There remains another piece of gross wastefulness, which, though it missed the popularity it was designed to catch, is still dangerous if it abstracts a single shilling from the war fund, and that is the Insurance Act. The cry of ninepence for fourpence was not a success even for those who raised it, but it has proved an expensive, as well as a useless, catchword ever since, and the sooner it is suppressed with all the vast train of paid officers who shout in its chorus the better. It has brought comfort to no parched lips; it has done no more than inspire a vast deal of purposeless rhetoric and waste, without any return to the country's revenues. Why should we not suspend the Act, with all the bureaucrats which it has called into being, until the terms of peace are signed? Then we can discuss in cold blood whether indeed it is necessary, even for the purposes of a General Election, to spend so much money and so much force to get in return little else than ill-temper and a sense of wrong.

The worst of it is that the leaders of the nation, official and self-appointed, are bound in the bonds of cant, from which they cannot escape. We know well enough that nothing save an enemy's bayonet can pierce the hide of Radical self-content. But we wish to avoid the enemy's bayonet, and therefore we would implore our governors to take the advice, which they so freely offer, and to make up their minds that they will ask no sacrifice of their fellow-citizens which they are not prepared to make themselves. Difficult as it is to expect economy from men who by pooling their salaries have announced their opinion that no man can live comfortably on £2000 a year, we do not wholly despair. The crisis of the war may arouse even the politician to a better frame of mind. The sentimentalists who cloud counsel outside the House give us no ray of hope. They are beyond the reach of reason or control. The very fact that they have taken on the unpaid job of making the world better, proves that they are unassailable by the common methods of argument. They have put on the triple brass of pride, and they will never admit to a living soul that they are not inspired

from on high. Here, for instance, is Professor Gilbert Murray, a pious Radical and a translator of Euripides. No man has ever captured the suburbs with greater ease than he. His honeyed translations are read in a thousand homes, where the Greek tongue is held in horror as an invention of the evil one. If any one should wave aloft the banner of a blameless life, surely it is he. And in his last pamphlet he confesses to a piece of conduct of which the mere citizen, who has not translated Euripides and who does not believe that the world may be saved by a scorn of patriotism, would be heartily ashamed. He makes confession, it is true; he makes no apology, as though, in fact, the utmost indulgence were due to a Radical and a professor. At any rate this is what he did, described in his own words: "On July 26 or 27 I was asked to sign a declaration in favour of British neutrality in the case of a war arising between the Great Powers. I agreed without hesitation. I did not believe there would be a war; the nations were not governed by lunatics. . . . By the time the declaration was published —it took a week collecting signatures—my attitude was changed." That is plain enough, isn't it? Yet, so far as we know, Professor Murray left his signature where it fell, without protest. For a year the world has believed that he agreed with the absurd professors who clamoured for peace where no peace was possible. And now we discover that when the letter appeared, fortified by his signature, his attitude was changed. He is as bad as the other professor, who excused himself on the ground that he had signed a letter which he had never seen. To us it seems far too grave a dereliction of duty to be passed over with a shrug. If we had put our name to a document, in which we did not believe or had not seen, and which was designed to entrap public opinion in a national crisis, we should have thought ourselves eternally and hopelessly dishonoured. The Radicals obviously have an easier standard of right and wrong, and if they account themselves "sensible men," as they do, we thank God that we are "damned fools."

And Professor Murray, thus finding a facile excuse for himself, proves the worth of his opinion by finding a yet more facile excuse for his friends Messrs Russell and Brailsford. He declares at the outset that he will never judge harshly a man who is the friend of every country but his own. He seems to have a natural love of pro-Germans, wherever they may be found. And for the sake of argument we will concede this much to him: we can understand that the "superior person" who deems himself too great for the obligation of patriotism, may take the side of an enemy when the enemy is in the right. Such a course appears to us contemptible; at any rate it is intelligible. The conduct of an

Englishman who condemns England, and bases his condemnation upon falsehoods favourable to Germany is, we confess, not even intelligible. Yet it does not disturb Professor Murray's equanimity. Mr Brailsford, says he, suppresses the fact that Sir Edward Grey had made a persistent effort for peace. Mr Russell finds an amiable excuse for Germany's attack upon Belgium. And even in Professor Murray's indulgent mind both Mr Russell and Mr Brailsford are wrong. Yet he defends them with ardour. "These writers," says he, "are in their way high-minded, disinterested, courageous, and often very clever, but they are not at present in a state of mind which enables them to see or even to seek the truth." Now, we have always believed that the friend of every country but his own, such as Professor Murray, found a solid justification in the pretence of justice. Professor Murray regrets this justification for his friends. He admits that they are at once anti-patriotic and unjust, and he will not call them traitors. So it comes to this, that a man may tell lies against his country on an enemy's behalf, and escape censure. When, therefore, does morality begin or end? There is, we suppose, no such thing as gratitude. To be thankful to the country which gave you birth, which educated you, which found you the means of making a living —this is an antiquated sentiment not worthy a true intellectual. You have a perfect right, if you like, to say things disadvantageous to your motherland, things in which there is no vestige of truth, and Professor Murray will still call you disinterested and courageous. And to Professor Murray we should like to put one hypothetical case. Suppose Sir Edward Grey a year ago had made an attack upon Professor Murray's chair, suppose he had known his attack to be unjustified and yet refused to withdraw it, suppose he had spent all the intervening period with the enemies of Greek, and then, a belated convert, had admitted himself wrong, without a single word of apology, without a hint of shame, without even a vague reference to a white sheet, what should we have thought of him? Would he not have forfeited all claim to be thought a candid, honourable man? We think he would. What does Professor Murray think?

Printed by William Blackwood and Sons.

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCXCIX. SEPTEMBER 1915. Vol. CXCVIII.

THE FIRST HUNDRED THOUSAND.

BY THE JUNIOR SUB.

XVIII. THE FRONT OF THE FRONT.

We took over these trenches a few days ago; and as the Germans are barely two hundred yards away, this chapter seems to justify its title.

For reasons foreshadowed last month, we find that we are committed to an indefinite period of trench-life, like every one else.

Certainly we are starting at the bottom of the ladder. These trenches are badly sited, badly constructed, difficult of access from the rear, and swarming with large, fat, unpleasant flies, of the bluebottle variety. They go to sleep, chiefly upon the ceiling of one's dug-out, during the short hours of darkness, but for twenty hours out of twenty-four they are very busy indeed. They divide their attentions between stray carrion—there is a good deal hereabout—and our rations. If you sit still for five minutes they also settle upon *you*, like pins in a pin-cushion. Then, when face, hands, and knees can endure no more, and the inevitable convulsive wriggle occurs, they rise in a vociferous swarm, only to settle again when the victim becomes quiescent. To these, high-explosives are a welcome relief.

The trenches themselves are no garden city, like those at Armentières. They were sited and dug in the dark, not many weeks ago, to secure two hundred yards of French territory recovered from the Bosche by bomb and bayonet. (The captured trench lies behind us now, and serves as our second line.) They are muddy—you come to water at three feet—and at one end, owing to their concave formation, are open to

enfilade. The parapet in many places is too low. If you make it higher with sandbags you offer the enemy a comfortable target: if you deepen the trench you turn it into a running stream. Therefore long-legged subalterns crawl painfully past these danger-spots on all-fours, envying Little Tich.

Then there is Zacchæus. We call him by this name because he lives up a tree. There is a row of pollarded willows standing parallel to our front, a hundred and fifty yards away. Up, or in, one of these lives Zacchæus. We have never seen him, but we know he is there; because if you look over the top of the parapet he shoots you through the head. We do not even know which of the trees he lives in. There are nine of them, and every morning we comb them out, one by one, with a machine-gun. But all in vain. Zacchæus merely crawls away into the standing corn behind his trees, and waits till we have finished. Then he comes back and tries to shoot the machine-gun officer. He has not succeeded yet, but he sticks to his task with gentle persistence. He is evidently of a persevering rather than vindictive disposition.

Then there is Unter den Linden. This celebrated thoroughfare is an old communication-trench. It runs, half-ruined, from the old German trench in our rear, right through our own front line, to the present German trenches. It constitutes such a bogey as the Channel Tunnel scheme once was: each side sits jealously at its own end, anticipating hostile enterprises from the other. It is also the residence of "Minnie." But we will return to Minnie later.

The artillery of both sides, too, contributes its mite. There is a dull roar far in the rear of the German trenches, followed by a whirring squeak overhead. Then comes an earth-shaking crash a mile behind us. We whip round, and there, in the failing evening light, against the sunset, there springs up the silhouette of a mighty tree in full foliage. Presently the silhouette disperses, drifts away, and—

"The coals is hame, right enough!" comments Private Tosh.

Instantly our guns reply, and we become the humble spectators of an artillery duel. Of course, if the enemy gets tired of "searching" the countryside for our guns and takes to "searching" our trenches instead, we lose all interest in the proceedings, and retire to our dug-outs, hoping that no direct hits will come our way.

But guns are notoriously erratic in their time-tables, and fickle in their attentions. It is upon Zacchæus and Unter den Linden—including Minnie—that we mainly rely for excitement.

As already recorded, we took over these trenches a few days ago, in the small hours of the morning. In the ordinary

course of events, relieving parties are usually able to march up under cover of darkness to the reserve trench, half a mile in rear of the firing line, and so proceed to their appointed place. But on this occasion the German artillery happened to be "distributing coal" among the billets behind. This made it necessary to approach our new home by tortuous ways, and to take to subterranean courses at a very early stage of the journey. For more than two hours we toiled along a trench just wide enough to permit a man to wear his equipment, sometimes bent double to avoid the bullets of snipers, sometimes knee-deep in glutinous mud.

Ayling, leading a machine-gun section who were burdened with their weapons and seven thousand rounds of ammunition, mopped his steaming brow and inquired of his guide how much farther there was to go.

"Abart two miles, sir," replied the youth with gloomy satisfaction. He was a private of the Cockney regiment whom we were relieving; and after the manner of his kind, would infinitely have preferred to conduct us down half a mile of a shell-swept road, leading straight to the heart of things, than waste time upon an uninteresting but safe *détour*.

At this Ayling's Number One, who was carrying a machine-gun tripod weighing forty-eight pounds, said something—something distressingly audible—and groaned deeply.

"If we'd come the way I wanted," continued the guide, much pleased with the effect of his words upon his audience, "we'd 'a bin there be now. But the Adjutant, 'e says to me——"

"If we had come the way you wanted," interrupted Ayling brutally, "we should probably have been in Kingdom Come by now. Hurry up!" Ayling, in common with the rest of those present, was not in the best of tempers, and the loquacity of the guide had been jarring upon him for some time.

The Cockney private, with the air of a deeply-wronged man, sulkily led on, followed by the dolorous procession. Another ten minutes' laboured progress brought them to a place where several ways met.

"This is the beginning of the reserve trenches, sir," announced the guide. "If we'd come the way I——"

"Lead on!" said Ayling, and his perspiring followers murmured threatening applause.

The guide, now in his own territory, selected the muddiest opening, and plunged down it. For two hundred yards or so he continued serenely upon his way, with the air of one exhibiting the metropolis to a party of country cousins. He passed numerous turnings. Then, once or twice, he paused irresolutely; then moved on. Finally he halted, and proceeded to climb out of the trench.

"What are you doing?" demanded Ayling suspiciously.

"We got to cut across the

open 'ere, sir," said the youth glibly. "Trench don't go no farther. Keep as low as you can."

With resigned grunts the weary pilgrims hoisted themselves and their numerous burdens out of their slimy thoroughfare, and followed their conductor through the long grass in single file, feeling painfully conspicuous against the whitening sky. Presently they discovered, and descended into, another trench—all but the man with the tripod, who descended into it before he discovered it—and proceeded upon their dolorous way. Once more the guide, who had been refreshingly but ominously silent for some time, paused irresolutely.

"Look here, my man," said Ayling, "do you, or do you not, know where you are?"

The paragon replied hesitatingly—

"Well, sir, if we'd come by the way I——"

Ayling took a deep breath, and though conscious of the presence of formidable competitors, was about to make the best of an officer's vocabulary, when a kilted figure loomed out of the darkness.

"Hallo! Who are you?" inquired Ayling.

"Thiss iss the Camerons' trenches, sirr," replied a polite West Highland voice. "What trenches wass you seeking?"

Ayling told him.

"They are behind you, sirr."

"I was just goin' to say, sir," chanted the guide, making one last effort to redeem his prestige, "as 'ow——"

"Party," commanded Ayling, "about turn!"

Having received details of the route from the friendly Cameron, he scrambled out of the trench and crawled along to what was now the head of the procession. A plaintive voice followed him.

"Beg pardon, sir, where shall *I* go now?"

Ayling answered the question explicitly, and moved off, feeling much better. The late conductor of the party trailed disconsolately in the rear.

"I should like to know wot I'm 'ere for," he murmured indignantly.

He got his answer, like a lightning-flash.

"For tae carry *this*," said the man with the tripod, turning round. "Here, caatch!"

II.

The day's work in trenches begins about nine o'clock the night before. Darkness having fallen, various parties steal out into the no-man's-land beyond the parapet. There are numerous things to be done. The barbed wire has been broken up by shrapnel, and must be repaired. The whole position in front of the wire must be patrolled, to prevent the enemy from creeping forward in the dark. The corn has grown to an uncomfortable height in places, so a fatigue

party is told off to cut it—surely the strangest species of harvesting that the annals of agriculture can record. On the left front the muffled clinking of picks and shovels announces that a "sap" is in course of construction: those incorrigible night-birds, the Royal Engineers, are making it for the machine-gunners, who in the fulness of time will convey their voluble weapon to its forward extremity, and "loose off a belt or two" in the direction of a rather dangerous hollow midway between the trenches, from which of late mysterious sounds of digging and guttural talking have been detected by the officer who lies in the listening-post, in front of our barbed-wire entanglement, drawing secrets from the bowels of the earth by means of a microphone.

Behind the firing trench even greater activity prevails. Damage done to the parapet by shell fire is being repaired. Positions and emplacements are being constantly improved, communication trenches widened or made more secure. Down these trenches fatigue parties are filing, to draw rations and water and ammunition from the limbered waggons which are waiting in the shadow of a wood, perhaps a mile back. It is at this hour, too, that the wounded, who have been lying pathetically cheerful and patient in the dressing-station in the reserve trench, are smuggled to the Field Ambulance—probably to find themselves safe in a London hospital within twenty-four hours. Lastly, under the kindly cloak of night, we bury our dead.

Meanwhile, within various stifling dug-outs, in the firing trench or support-trench, overheated company commanders are dictating reports or filling in returns. (Even now the Round Game Department is not entirely shaken off.) There is the casualty return, and a report on the doings of the enemy, and another report of one's own doings, and a report on the direction of the wind, and so on. Then there are various indents to fill up—scrawled on a wobbly writing-block with a blunt indelible pencil by the light of a guttering candle—for ammunition, and sandbags, and revetting material.

All this literature has to be sent to Battalion Headquarters by one A.M., either by orderly or telephone. There it is collated and condensed, and forwarded to the Brigade, which submits it to the same process and sends it on, to be served up piping hot and easily digestible at the breakfast table of the Division, five miles away, at eight o'clock.

You must not imagine, however, that all this night-work is performed in gross darkness. On the contrary. There is abundance of illumination; and by a pretty thought, each side illuminates the other. We perform our nocturnal tasks, in front of and behind the firing trench, amid a perfect hail of star-shells and magnesium lights, topped up at times by a searchlight—all supplied by

our obliging friend the Hun. We, on our part, do our best to return these graceful compliments.

The curious and uncanny part of it all is that there is no firing. During these brief hours there exists an informal truce, founded on the principle of live and let live. It would be an easy business to wipe out that working-party, over there by the barbed wire, with a machine-gun. It would be child's play to shell the road behind the enemy's trenches, crowded as it must be with ration-waggons and water-carts, into a blood-stained wilderness. But so long as each side confines itself to purely defensive and recuperative work, there is little or no interference. That slave of duty, Zacchæus, keeps on pegging away; and occasionally, if a hostile patrol shows itself too boldly, there is a little exuberance from a machine-gun; but on the whole there is silence. After all, if you prevent your enemy from drawing his rations, his remedy is simple: he will prevent you from drawing yours. Then both parties will have to fight on empty stomachs, and neither of them, tactically, will be a penny the better. So, unless some elaborate scheme of attack is brewing, the early hours of the night are comparatively peaceful.

But what is that sudden disturbance in the front-line trench? A British rifle rings out, then another, and another, until there is an agitated fusillade from end to end of the section. Instantly the sleepless host across the way replies, and for three minutes or so a hurricane rages. The working parties out in front lie flat on their faces, cursing patiently. Suddenly the storm dies away, and perfect silence reigns once more. It was a false alarm. Some watchman, deceived by the whispers of the night breeze, or merely a prey to nerves, has discerned a phantom army approaching through the gloom, and has opened fire thereon. This often occurs when troops are new to trench-work.

It is during these hours, too, that regiments relieve one another in the trenches. The outgoing regiment cannot leave its post until the incoming regiment has "taken over." Consequently you have, for a brief space, two thousand troops packed into a trench calculated to hold one thousand. Then it is that strong men swear themselves faint, and the Rugby football player has reason to be thankful for his previous training in the art of "getting through the scrum." However perfect your organisation may be, congestion is bound to occur here and there; and it is no little consolation to us to feel, as we surge and sway in the darkness, that over there in the German lines a Saxon and a Prussian private, irretrievably jammed together in a narrow communication trench, are consigning one another to perdition in just the same husky whisper as that employed by Private Mucklewame and his

"opposite number" in the regiment which has come to relieve him.

These "reliefs" take place every four or five nights. There was a time, not so long ago, when a regiment was relieved, not when it was weary, but when another regiment could be found to replace it. Our own first battalion once remained in the trenches, unrelieved and only securing its supplies with difficulty, for five weeks and three days. During all that time they were subject to most pressing attentions on the part of the Bosches, but they never lost a yard of trench. They received word from Headquarters that to detach another regiment for their relief would seriously weaken other and most important dispositions. The Commander-in-Chief would therefore be greatly obliged if they could hold on. So they held on.

At last they came out, and staggered back to billets. Their old quarters, naturally, had long been appropriated by other troops, and the officers had some difficulty in recovering their kits.

"I don't mind being kept in trenches for several weeks," remarked their commander to the staff officer who received him when he reported, "and I can put up with losing my sleeping-bag; but I do object to having my last box of cigars looted by the blackguards who took over our billets!"

The staff officer expressed sympathy, and the subject dropped. But not many days later, while the battalion were still resting, their commander was roused in the middle of the night from the profound slumber which only the experience of many nights of anxious vigil can induce, by the ominous message—

"An orderly to see you, from General Headquarters, sir!"

The colonel rolled stoically out of bed, and commanded that the orderly should be brought before him.

The man entered, carrying, not a despatch, but a package, which he proffered with a salute.

"With the Commander-in-Chief's compliments, sir!" he announced.

The package was a box of cigars!

But that was before the days of "K(i)."

But the night is wearing on. It is half-past one—time to knock off work. Tired men, returning from ration-drawing or sap-digging, throw themselves down and fall dead asleep in a moment. Only the sentries, with their elbows on the parapet, maintain their sleepless watch. From behind the enemy's lines comes a deep boom — then another. The big guns are waking up again, and have decided to commence their day's work by speeding our empty ration waggons upon their homeward way. Let them! So long as they refrain from practising direct hits on our front-line parapet, and disturbing our brief and hardly-earned repose, they may fire where they

please. The ration train is well able to look after itself.

"A whiff o' shrapnel will dae nae harrm to thae strawberry-jam pinchers!" observes Private Tosh bitterly, rolling into his dug-out. By this opprobrious term he designates that distinguished body of men, the Army Service Corps. A prolonged diet of plum-and-apple jam has implanted in the breasts of the men in the trenches certain dark and unworthy suspicions concerning the entire altruism of those responsible for the distribution of the Army's rations.

It is close on daybreak, and the customary whispered order runs down the stertorous trench—

"Stand to arms!"

Straightway the parapets are lined with armed men; the waterproof sheets which have been protecting the machine-guns from the dews of night are cast off; and we stand straining our eyes into the whitening darkness.

This is the favourite hour for attack. At any moment the guns may open fire upon our parapet, or a solid wall of grey-clad figures rise from that strip of corn-land less than a hundred yards away, and descend upon us. Well, we are ready for them. Just by way of signalising the fact, there goes out a ragged volley of rifle fire, and a machine-gun rips off half a dozen bursts into the standing corn. But apparently there is nothing doing this morning. The day grows brighter, but there is no movement upon the part of Brother Bosche.

But — what is that light haze hanging over the enemy's trenches? It is slight, almost impalpable, but it appears to be drifting towards us. Can it be——?

Next moment every man is hurriedly pulling his gas helmet over his head, while Lieutenant Waddell beats a frenzied tocsin upon the instrument provided for the purpose—to wit, an empty eighteen-pounder shell, which, suspended from a bayonet stuck into the parados (or back wall) of the trench, makes a most efficient alarm-gong. The sound is repeated all along the trench, and in two minutes every man is in his place, cowled like a member of the Holy Inquisition, glaring through an eye-piece of mica, and firing madly into the approaching wall of vapour.

But the wall approaches very slowly—in fact, it almost stands still—and finally, as the rising sun disentangles itself from a pink horizon and climbs into the sky, it begins to disappear. In half an hour nothing is left, and we take off our helmets, sniffing the morning air dubiously. But all we smell is the old mixture — corpses and chloride of lime.

The incident, however, was duly recorded by Major Kemp in his report of the day's events, as follows:—

4.7 A.M.—*Gas alarm, false. Due either to morning mist, or the fact that enemy found breeze insufficient, and discontinued their attempt.*

"Still, I'm not sure," he continued, slapping his bald head with a bandana handkerchief, "that a whiff of chlorine or bromine wouldn't do these trenches a considerable amount of good. It would tone down some of the deceased a bit, and wipe out these infernal flies. Waddell, if I give you a shilling, will you take it over to the German trenches and ask them to drop it into the meter?"

"I do not think, sir," replied the literal Waddell, "that an English shilling would fit a German meter. Probably a mark would be required, and I have only a franc. Besides, sir, do you think that——"

"Surgical operation at seven-thirty, sharp!" intimated the major to the medical officer, who entered the dug-out at that moment. "For our friend here"—indicating the bewildered Waddell. "Sydney Smith's prescription! Now, what about breakfast?"

About nine o'clock the enemy indulges in what is usually described, most disrespectfully, as "a little morning hate"—in other words, a bombardment. Beginning with a *hors d'œuvre* of shrapnel along the reserve trench—much to the discomfort of Headquarters, who are shaving—he proceeds to "search" a tract of woodland in our immediate rear, his quarry being a battery of motor machine-guns, which has wisely decamped some hours previously. Then, after scientifically "traversing" our second line, which has rashly advertised its position and range by cooking its breakfast over a smoky fire, he brings the display to a superfluous conclusion by dropping six "Black Marias" into the deserted ruins of a village not far behind us. After that comes silence; and we are able, in our hot, baking trenches, assisted by clouds of bluebottles, to get on with the day's work.

This consists almost entirely in digging. As already stated, these are bad trenches. The parapet is none too strong—at one point it has been knocked down for three days running—the communication trenches are few and narrow, and there are not nearly enough dug-outs. Yesterday three men were wounded; and owing to the impossibility of carrying a stretcher along certain parts of the trench, they had to be conveyed to the rear in their ground-sheets—bumped against projections, bent round sharp corners, and sometimes lifted, perforce, bodily into view of the enemy. So every man toils with a will, knowing full well that in a few hours' time he may prove to have been his own benefactor. Only the sentries remain at the parapets. They no longer expose themselves, as at night, but take advantage of the laws of optical reflection, as exemplified by the trench periscope. (This, in spite of its grand title, is nothing but a tiny mirror clipped on to a bayonet.)

At half-past twelve comes dinner—bully-beef, with biscuit and jam—after which each tired man, coiling himself up in the trench, or crawling

underground, according to the accommodation at his disposal, drops off into instant and heavy slumber. The hours from two till five in the afternoon are usually the most uneventful of the twenty-four, and are therefore devoted to hardly-earned repose.

But there is to be little peace this afternoon. About half-past three, Bobby Little, immersed in pleasant dreams —dreams of cool shades and dainty companionship — is brought suddenly to the surface of things by—

"Whoo-oo-oo-oo-UMP!

—followed by a heavy thud upon the roof of his dug-out. Earth and small stones descend in a shower upon him.

"Dirty dogs!" he comments, looking at his watch. Then he puts his head out of the dug-out.

"Lie close, you men!" he cries. "There's more of this coming. Any casualties?"

The answer to the question is obscured by another burst of shrapnel, which explodes a few yards short of the parapet, and showers bullets and fragments of shell into the trench. A third and a fourth follow. Then comes a pause. A message is passed down for the stretcher-bearers. Things are growing serious. Five minutes later Bobby, having despatched his wounded to the dressing-station, proceeds with all haste to Captain Blaikie's dug-out.

"How many, Bobby?"

"Six wounded. Two of them won't last as far as the rear, I'm afraid, sir."

Captain Blaikie looks grave.

"Better ring up the Gunners, I think. Where are the shells coming from?"

"That wood on our left front, I think."

"That's P 27. Telephone orderly, there?"

A figure appears in the doorway.

"Yes, sirr."

"Ring up Major Cavanagh, and say that H 21 is being shelled from P 27. Retaliate!"

"Verra good, sirr."

The telephone orderly disappears, to return in five minutes.

"Major Cavanagh's compliments, sirr, and he is coming up himself for tae observe from the firing trench."

"Good egg!" observes Captain Blaikie. "Now we shall see some shooting, Bobby!"

Presently the Gunner major arrives, accompanied by an orderly, who pays out wire as he goes. The major adjusts his periscope, while the orderly thrusts a metal peg into the ground and fits a telephone receiver to his head.

"Number one gun!" chants the major, peering into his periscope; "three-five-one-nothing — lyddite — fourth charge!"

These mystic observations are repeated into the telephone by the Cockney orderly, in a confidential undertone.

"Report when ready!" continues the major.

"Report when ready!" echoes the orderly. Then—

"Number one gun ready, sir!"

"Fire!"

"Fire!" Then, politely—

"Number one has fired, sir."

The major stiffens to his periscope, and Bobby Little, deeply interested, wonders what has become of the report of the gun. He forgets that sound does not travel much faster than a thousand feet a second, and that the guns are a mile and a half back. Presently, however, there is a distant boom. Almost simultaneously the lyddite shell passes overhead with a scream. Bobby, having no periscope, cannot see the actual result of the shot, though he tempts Providence (and Zacchæus) by peering over the top of the parapet.

"Number one, two-nothing minutes more right," commands the major. "Same range and charge."

Once more the orderly goes through his ritual, and presently another shell screams overhead.

Again the major observes the result.

"Repeat!" he says. "Nothing-five seconds more right."

This time he is satisfied.

"Parallel lines on number one," he commands crisply. "One round battery fire—twenty seconds!"

For the last time the order is passed down the wire, and the major hands his periscope to the ever-grateful Bobby, who has hardly got his eyes to the glass when the round of battery fire commences. One—two—three—four—the avenging shells go shrieking on their way, at intervals of twenty seconds. There are four muffled thuds, and four great columns of earth and *débris* spring up before the wood. Answer comes there none. The offending battery has prudently effaced itself.

"Cease fire!" says the major, "and register!" Then he turns to Captain Blaikie.

"That'll settle them for a bit," he observes. "By the way, had any more trouble with Minnie?"

"We had Hades from her yesterday," replies Blaikie, in answer to this extremely personal question. "She started at a quarter-past five in the morning, and went on till about ten."

(Perhaps, at this point, it would be as well to introduce Minnie a little more formally. She is the most unpleasant of her sex, and her full name is *Minenwerfer*, or German trench-mortar. She resides, spasmodically, in Unter den Linden. Her extreme range is about two hundred yards, so she confines her attentions to front-line trenches. Her *modus operandi* is to discharge a large cylindrical bomb into the air. The bomb, which is about fifteen inches long and some eight inches in diameter, describes a leisurely parabola, performing grotesque somersaults on the way, and finally falls with a soft thud into the trench, or against the parapet. There, after an interval of ten seconds, Minnie's offspring explodes; and as she contains about thirty pounds of dynamite, no dug-out or parapet can stand against her.)

"Did she do much damage?" inquires the Gunner.

"Killed two men and buried another. They were in a dug-out."

The Gunner shakes his head.

"No good taking cover against Minnie," he says. "The only way is to come out into the open trench, and dodge her."

"So we found," replies Blaikie. "But they pulled our legs badly the first time. They started off with three 'whizz-bangs'"—a whizz-bang is a particularly offensive form of shell which bursts two or three times over, like a Chinese cracker—"so we all took cover and lay low. The consequence was that Minnie was able to send her little contribution along unobserved. The filthy thing fell short of the trench, and exploded just as we were all getting up again. It smashed up three or four yards of parapet, and scuppered the three poor chaps I mentioned."

"Have you located her?"

"Yes. Just behind that stunted willow, on our left front. I fancy they bring her along there to do her bit, and then trot her back to billets, out of harm's way. She is their two o'clock turn—two A.M. and two P.M."

"Two o'clock turn—h'm!" says the Gunner major meditatively. "What about our chipping in with a one-fifty-five turn—half a dozen H E shells into Minnie's dressing-room—eh? I must think this over."

"Do!" said Blaikie cordially. "Minnie is Willie's worst werfer, and the sooner she is put out of action the better for all of us. To-day, for some reason, she failed to appear, but previous to that she has not failed for five mornings in succession to batter down the same bit of our parapet."

"Where's that?" asks the major, getting out a trench-map.

"P 7—a most unhealthy spot. Minnie pushes it over about two every morning. The result is that we have to mount guard over the breach all day. We build everything up again at night, and Minnie sits there as good as gold, and never dreams of interfering. You can almost hear her cooing over us. Then, as I say, at two o'clock, just as the working party comes in and gets under cover, she lets slip one of her disgusting bombs, and undoes the work of about four hours. It was a joke at first, but we are getting fed up now. That's the worst of the Bosche. He starts by being playful; but if not suppressed at once, he gets rough; and that, of course, spoils all the harmony of the proceedings. So I cordially commend your idea of the one-fifty-five turn, sir."

"I'll see what can be done," says the major. "I think the best plan would be a couple of hours' solid frightfulness, from every battery we can switch on. To-morrow afternoon, perhaps, but I'll let you know. You'll have to clear out of this bit of trench altogether, as we shall shoot pretty low. So long!"

III.

It is six o'clock next evening, and peace reigns over our trench. This is the hour at which one usually shells aeroplanes—or rather, at which the Germans shell ours, for their own seldom venture out in broad daylight. But this evening, although two or three are up in the blue, buzzing inquisitively over the enemy's lines, their attendant escort of white shrapnel puffs is entirely lacking. Far away behind the German lines a house is burning fiercely.

"The Hun is a bit *piano* to-night," observes Captain Blaikie, attacking his tea.

"The Hun has been rather firmly handled this afternoon," replies Captain Wagstaffe. "I think he has had an eye-opener. There are no flies on our Divisional Artillery."

Bobby Little heaved a contented sigh. For two hours that afternoon he had sat, half-deafened, while six-inch shells skimmed the parapet in both directions, a few feet above his head. The Gunner major had been as good as his word. Punctually at one-fifty-five "Minnie's" two o'clock turn had been anticipated by a round of high-explosive shells directed into her suspected place of residence. What the actual result had been nobody knew, but Minnie had made no attempt to raise her voice since. Thereafter the German front-line trenches had been "plastered" from end to end, while the trenches farther back were attended to with methodical thoroughness. The German guns had replied vigorously, but directing only a passing fire at the trenches, had devoted their efforts chiefly to the silencing of the British artillery. In this enterprise they had been remarkably unsuccessful.

"Any casualties?" asked Blaikie.

"None here," replied Wagstaffe. "There may be some back in the support trenches."

"We might telephone and inquire."

"No good at present. The wires are all cut to pieces. The signallers are repairing them now."

"*I* was nearly a casualty," confessed Bobby modestly.

"How?"

"That first shell of ours nearly knocked my head off! I was standing up at the time, and it rather took me by surprise. It just cleared the parados. In fact, it kicked a lot of gravel into the back of my neck."

"Most people get it in the neck here, sooner or later," remarked Captain Blaikie sententiously. "Personally, I don't much mind being killed, but I do bar being buried alive. That is why I dislike Minnie so." He rose, and stretched himself. "Heigho! I suppose it's about time we detailed patrols and working parties for to-night. What a lovely sky! A truly peaceful atmosphere — what? It

gives one a sort of Sunday-evening feeling, somehow."

"May I suggest an explanation?" said Wagstaffe.

"By all means."

"It *is* Sunday evening!"

Captain Blaikie whistled gently, and said—

"By Jove, so it is." Then, after a pause: "This time last Sunday——"

Last Sunday had been an off-day—a day of cloudless summer beauty. Tired men had slept; tidy men had washed their clothes; restless men had wandered at ease about the countryside, careless of the guns which grumbled everlastingly a few miles away. There had been impromptu Church Parades for each denomination, in the corner of a wood which was part of the demesne of a shell-torn chateau.

It is a sadly transformed wood. The open space before the chateau, once a smooth expanse of tennis-lawn, is now a dusty picketing-ground for transport mules, destitute of a single blade of grass. The ornamental lake is full of broken bottles and empty jam-tins. The pagoda-like summer-house, so inevitable to French chateau gardens, is a quartermaster's store. Half the trees have been cut down for fuel. Still, the July sun streams very pleasantly through the remainder, and the Psalms of David float up from beneath their shade quite as sweetly as they usually do from the neighbourhood of the precentor's desk in the kirk at home—perhaps sweeter.

The wood itself is a *point d'appui*, or fortified post. One has to take precautions, even two or three miles behind the main firing line. A series of trenches zigzags in and out among the trees, and barbed wire is interlaced with the undergrowth. In the farthermost corner lies an improvised cemetery. Some of the inscriptions on the little wooden crosses are only three days old. Merely to read a few of these touches the imagination and stirs the blood. Here you may see the names of English Tommies and Highland Jocks, side by side with their Canadian kith and kin. A little apart lie more graves, surmounted by epitaphs written in strange characters, such as few white men can read. These are the Indian troops. There they lie, side by side—the mute wastage of war, but a living testimony, even in their last sleep, to the breadth and the unity of the British Empire. The great, machine-made Empire of Germany can show no such graves: when her soldiers die, they sleep alone.

The Church of England service had come last of all. Late in the afternoon a youthful and red-faced chaplain had arrived on a bicycle, to find a party of officers and men lying in the shade of a broad oak waiting for him. (They were a small party: naturally, the great majority of the regiment are what the identity-discs call "Pres" or "R.C.")

"Sorry to be late, sir," he said to the senior officer,

saluting. "This is my sixth sh—service to-day, and I have come seven miles for it."

He mopped his brow cheerfully; and having produced innumerable hymn-books from a saddle-bag and set his congregation in array, read them the service, in a particularly pleasing and well-modulated voice. After that he preached a modest and manly little sermon, containing references which carried Bobby Little, for one, back across the Channel to other scenes and other company. After the sermon came a hymn, sung with great vigour. Tommy loves singing hymns—when he happens to know and like the tune.

"I know you chaps like hymns," said the padre, when they had finished. "Let's have another before you go. What do you want?"

A most unlikely-looking person suggested *Abide with Me.* When it was over, and the party, standing as rigid as their own rifles, had sung *God Save the King,* the preacher announced, awkwardly — almost apologetically—

"If any of you would like to —er—communicate, I shall be very glad. May not have another opportunity for some time, you know. I think over there"—he indicated a quiet corner of the wood, not far from the little cemetery—"would be a good place."

He pronounced the benediction, and then, after further recurrence to his saddle-bag, retired to his improvised sanctuary. Here, with a ration-box for altar, and strands of barbed wire for choir-stalls, he made his simple preparations.

Half a dozen of the men, and all the officers, followed him. That was just a week ago.

Captain Wagstaffe broke the silence at last.

"It's a rotten business, war," he said pensively—"when you come to think of it. Hallo, there goes the first star-shell! Come along, Bobby!"

Dusk had fallen. From the German trenches a thin luminous thread stole up into the darkening sky, leaned over, drooped, and burst into dazzling brilliance over the British parapet. Simultaneously a desultory rifle fire crackled down the lines. The night's work had begun.

(To be continued.)

FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

NEWS FROM GURIN.

GURIN is a very nice place. It is a *pukka* Garden City. Not at all the Creation of Architects with a Mission, of Builders with Faith, of Furniture Designers with Dyspepsia and Jaundice. Not the sort of Garden City that is good for a score of pages to Mr Punch yearly; not at all a chosen, *ad hoc* place of dwelling for cultured and other cranks. The site of Gurin is undulating and grassy, and the earth is nice clean red-brown. Big trees, all about a hundred years old, make shade everywhere. There are no roads, no drains, no water laid on, no electric light, nor telephones, nor bathrooms, nor garden rollers, nor shops, nor taxis,—nothing at all of that sort.

But there is a fine expanse of grass dropping down for half a mile to where the blue water of the Faro rolls sparkling amidst banks of golden yellow sand. There are houses scattered about in the shady coolth amidst the trees, and each house is just exactly the sort of house that the people living in it most prefer. If it is too small they run up more red mud wall, and stick a bright yellow thatch atop. If it is too big, well they evacuate what they do not want. This is easy, because each room is a separate house. Some are round and some are square, and there is an outer wall enclosing the group that is the Home.

And the cattle: there are no better beasts in Africa, and few so well-conditioned. They are big, reckoning by English standards, and their horns are very long, and spread very widely, and they have a hump. Very sleek they are, and carry beautiful coats. You get lots of milk at Gurin—enough to stock a dairy with for a couple of shillings. And if you are not addicted to milk, why, a roasted hump is what Colonel Newnham Davis would call the specialty of Gurin—and the tail of the Gurin cow makes a wonderful soup, even in the hands of a native cook. You can buy a hump and a tail, with the beast that carries them, for fifteen shillings.

And the Gurin sheep has a saddle: people who have not met the African sheep will scoff at me for putting this in. But those whom fortune and the gods, or other influences, have cast into Africa to live will all be wanting to know how far it is to Gurin from their own particular pitch.

And you get bananas and fish and good ponies in Gurin—and the ponies do well there—and forage, there's mountains of it, and ever so cheap.

With regard to the citizens of this place of delights—here we come to something different altogether from what we have

been discussing. The Gurin man is by no means vile, really he is rather nice. He is negroid rather than negro, and there is something of the Semite in him. It would be an exaggeration to call him an enthusiastic untiring toiler, at any rate when the toil is at all associated with carrying or lifting, or doing anything in the sun. But he makes the most wonderful straw hats, ever so many feet across the brim, whilst sitting in the shade, and he sells them for a single sixpence apiece.

But the other morning, having arranged for a lot of men to make a thatch, I met a procession of eight grave and turbaned gentlemen drifting gently along a path, *against the wind*, carrying each a couple of pieces of bamboo of the sort that they make the frame of a roof with. They were very polite, and said they were of the number of them that I was employing in the business of the roof, at a fair daily wage. We chatted awhile—and one of the eight collected all the bamboos and hurtled off towards the work with the bundle, and his seven colleagues went off quite sharply to get more bamboos, promising as they went to get a *lot*, and bring a *lot* each, and *quickly*. As my old Chief used to say, "There is a lot of human nature in an African." A great truth. We most of us work as little as we dare, and the African is more daring than the most of *nous autres*, that is all. Personally, I should love to be the sort of daring reckless person that sits in the shade at the foot of a fine tree for eight hours a day, seven days a week, doing nothing at all. It must be very restful.

A hundred years ago Gurin was not much of a place at all. In fact there wasn't even a village there. But a man called Modibo, who was the son of a nomad cattle-owner, got tired of herding cattle and went into business as a conqueror. His father was not of any particular account in the community that he adorned: lots of nomad cattle-owners had more beasts than he; so Modibo got out of that community in order to get on in the world. He fought and raided and murdered and stole, and presently became powerful, and people began to respect him. I respect him myself, though he is long since dead, and cannot help nor hurt me. He was the man who built Gurin. He made himself a house there—and you can see the ruins of that house yet. Modibo built well, though he built with mud, and he hit as hard as he builded. The community that he had come out of helped him a lot, directly he was strong enough to beat them. And he did beat them, well and truly. Then he picked out the hardest and brainiest of the survivors and made them his lieutenants. And the raiding parties went farther, and Modibo grew richer and more powerful and more respected than ever. Gurin grew with him.

The time came when he had

to go. He had made for himself a kingdom of sixty or seventy thousand square miles — and held it by his own strength, and by the favour of the Sariki n Musulmi at Sokoto. The Sariki n Musulmi allowed Modibo to call himself Emir of Yola, and gave him a flag—not much of a flag really. A small, mean-looking, dirty yellow thing on a spear it was when I saw it the other day. Still it was the only flag in that part of Africa, and no doubt Modibo thought it was worth while, because he kept it. And he was a man whose whole career indicated a shrewd appreciation of values. So Modibo went away from Gurin, and dwelt at Yola, thirty miles to the westward, where he made a city, and where he eventually died, in the seventy-sixth year of his age and the sixtieth of his waging of wars. That was his end, and there is no more about him in this paper. His successors lived always in Yola, and for a matter of sixty years or so Gurin jogged along, happy in making no history. The shade trees grew year by year, giving more shade and better shade, the pasturage got richer and richer, Modibo's house decayed and decayed, and only the water of the Faro showed no difference; it went sparkling and blue along those golden banks of sand, just in the old way.

And then England and Germany went to war last August. Gurin's river, the Faro, is the boundary line separating British Nigeria and German Kamerun. Thirty miles west is the important British station of Yola, — on the Binue river. Forty miles east is Garua, the chief German post, also on the Binue river. Right at the start our people dashed out of Yola, and all but took Garua. It was a very close thing indeed, but Garua survived, and we lost a lot of good men: it was only the quality of them that survived that saved us from disaster. So for the next few months our side sat in Yola, making good losses, and getting ready for another dash at Garua. And the Squareheads — naturally enough—had their tails right up in the air, and pranced about a good deal, and got off a lot of tall talk and hot air on the natives.

It was at this juncture that Gurin came back into history. A born bushranging brigandy broth of a bhoy set out from Yola, for the Border, with half a dozen native constables. To most of us he was known as Paiko, and his methods, like his results, were often surprising. Paiko and his band got to Gurin, and there he proceeded to convert the carbine-carrying, foot-slogging constables into mounted infantry. This occupied his mornings. The afternoons were given to collecting the men and lads of the place and setting them, each carrying a stick, to drill, out on the open grassy slope that looked across the river to Kamerun. In between whiles Paiko dug trenches wildly all over the place, and in the middlemost he made a gun emplacement, and in this he mounted a Berkfeld pump

filter. From a little way off it looked like a machine-gun. Native spies, nosing about in the nearer distance, were positive that it was a maxim on a tripod mounting. And they so reported to the High and Well-Born Hauptmann von Duhring, who was sitting over against Gurin, on his own side the Border, with a hundred native soldiers and three or four Europeans.

Now Paiko was so far from being a professional soldier that he had at one time served in the Royal Navy. But that's another story. In South Africa he rode with the other Yeoboys. At Gurin he set out to bluff the enemy, and he made good. The Hauptmann watched Gurin through glasses—he saw the afternoon drill performances; he watched the morning riding-school; he saw the trenches, and he heard of the maxim. He began to get nervous and to doubt a little the wisdom of staying within five miles of such a formidable force. Paiko played a master-stroke. There was in Yola a revered relic of the days when junior Political Officers were expected, each in his district, to accept delivery of one small cart, and then to improvise mules, attendants, gear, roads, &c., and make animal transport a living reality. But few indeed of the officers concerned rose to this exceptional opportunity of turning their leisure hours to good and useful purpose; and to-day all that remain of the scheme are a few derelict decrepit carts dotted about the country, and a settled conviction in the mind of authority that animal transport is not practicable in this part of the world. This is a digression, and has brought us a long way from the old cart that Paiko had seen lying about in Yola.

Any one less of an amateur than Paiko would have written to ask for a loan of the cart. This would have been in accordance with precedent and general practice, and would have ensured the business going through the proper channel, would have led to a considerable amount of correspondence,—would, in a word, have satisfied the great Shibboleth. And Paiko might have got the cart at the end of it all. Or he might not. But, being a very amateur, he did none of these things. He sent in a pair of trusty agents who chanced to arrive late in the evening, failed to find anybody who knew anything about the cart, and just took it back with them to Gurin. The Chief Brigand mobilised his half-dozen constable mounted infantry men, and marched three miles out of Gurin along the Yola road to meet and escort the cart. It was really a very wee cart, but it arrived in Gurin with a lot of people pulling it, and much covered up, and the whole six constables and Paiko massed closely about it. And that afternoon the Hauptmann and his army knew that a field-gun had arrived to strengthen the force against them.

The native scout, or intelligence *wallah*, is past all power of description. To what he

has not seen he adds the double of what he has picked up on the roadside from casual passers-by; he multiplies the sum by two, or ten, or some other round number, embroiders and colours and otherwise embellishes to the best of his ability, and then runs in to his employer and hands out his "news," all hot and hot.

Now, though Paiko and his Braves filled the Gurin stage very sufficiently during the day, they never slept there. Nightly, after dinner, they stole silently away a mile or two into the bush, where they dwelt in peace till daylight came. It is not well to be one of seven individuals called upon to entertain a hundred or more other individuals, all unexpectedly, in the dark, even when it is granted that whereas the seven have ancient carbines, the hundred are hampered with rifles. But that night the Hauptnann and his people faded gently away out of their camp, and went hot-foot for Garua,—since it was clear that with the morning light the field-gun was timed to start and shell them off the earth. So the Pump Filter came back to its uses of Peace, and the oddments of kit were packed into the cart, and the Gurin Observation Post moved off to another point on the Border. And moved quickly too.

On the march, word came of a German officer and a small escort trekking along the big road near the Border, heading for Garua. Spies said he had a great number of loads with him. The Observation Post, ex-Gurin, pushed out to have a look at the traveller. They did not find him. But in a village they came upon the loads he had been taking along. Their owner had cleared, hours before, and it was necessary for the loads to be examined. So examined they were—with diligence and care. They proved to be the personal kit of the officer, and a very brilliant kit too. German officers in Kamerun were poorly paid—they got less wages even than officials of similar rank and standing on our side of the Border. But it was the practice for them to extract money presents from the chiefs in their districts. If the chiefs had no cash, other things were accepted in lieu — ivory, for instance. I am not sure that the practice is not a good one: there is historical warranty for it. Was it not King James, of Scotland VI., of England I., who achieved popularity, in the latter country at any rate, by his system of "Benevolences"? The German officials in North Kamerun used to go back to the Fatherland full of money, "presents" from native chiefs,—and very nice too.

Thus it was that the loads that fell to be examined by Paiko were full of interest. Uniforms, gold lace and silver lace, and wonderful hats; camera and gramophone, and any amount of things to eat and drink—especially to drink. There was a great deal of champagne, — but all of it sweet — so it is said. It was a real labour repacking all the things into the boxes, and getting them sent away to

Yola. At Yola they were unpacked again, and examined some more—and there also it got about that the champagne was sweet.

For the next few months Paiko and his men, their number grown to a round dozen, moved back and forth along the Border, sometimes on one side, generally on the other. Wherever there were enemy gathered together to the number of thirty or under, thither very soon came the twelve. And the Squareheads hated Paiko and his army. But the people in Gurin made a song about him, and used to sing it o' nights. In case the eye of Paiko should chance to light on this paper I shall not here set down the song, and thereby I spare his blushes. But this I will say: the words deal very faithfully with him, and the loyal sentiments are unimpeachable; the tune is rotten. Gurin had reason to be grateful: the enemy never penetrated there in Paiko's time. Other villages on this side close to the Border suffered badly. The enemy set loose a number of small bands of men with rifles. These bands consisted generally of half a dozen native soldiers, and they were very efficient apostles of frightfulness. One programme was common to them all. They would cross the Border at night, get to one of our villages, make for the headman's house, and cut his throat with a bayonet. They then looted anything that was portable, fired at any men they saw, and made off, generally taking with them a woman or two. In one village they got cross with a woman and cut off her hands. These were the people, these murderers, that Paiko spent months hunting down. Right in the background, well behind this screen of murderers, there lurked a European or two, possibly more. But the dozen never managed to get to grips with *them:* they were "hup, hoff, and hout of it" before Paiko could get at them.

Except one Sunday morning when he dashed out from Gurin and ran a gang of thirty with three Europeans so hard that one of the white men fell off his horse and lost his helmet, threw away his coat and his revolver, and made his way back to Garua, *sans* horse, *sans* helmet, *sans* most things, on his flat feet, and filled with a great respect for the man of the pump filter maxim. That was Paiko's last Border exploit. The arrival of more troops made something like an investment of Garua a possibility, and Paiko joined the Gilded Staff and went to sit on the hill called Tondire, which looks from the south, across the Binue river at Garua, to the north.

Gurin became a point on the lines of communication instead of a frontier intelligence post. And a small fort was made nearly a mile outside the town, on top of a small rise, handy to the river. A mud fort it was, round, a hundred feet in diameter, with a deep waggley narrow trench running all round outside the wall. And there was a trench that went from the inside of the fort, tunnel-wise, to the stream,—very convenient for getting

water if anybody was shooting at the fort and you were inside and wanted a wash or a drink. Given a fort, the next thing necessary was a garrison, and Gurin found itself entertaining a military officer, with a British N.C.O. and some thirty-five soldiers, plus a dozen constables and a political officer, this last granted the local and temporary rank of lieutenant and sent to function as intelligence officer. He did his best, poor wretch, and it is to be remembered, as somebody once pointed out, that even political officers are God's creatures and have their feelings—*e.g.*, if you kick one of them he will feel hurt. In some cases there is no doubt that allowing these persons to call themselves and to think of themselves as temporary local lieutenants had a bad effect; they got a bit over themselves, so to speak, and were prone to swagger about and boast of the honour that had come to them.

A night or two after the garrison started work there was an incident. At that time they had not gone into residence in the fort, for various reasons—there were no enemy anywhere about, the fort was not quite finished, and the town was a much nicer place to live in than the fort, anyway. So the Soldier Bature and the Intelligence Officer were quartered in a nice shady spot, with the men a couple of hundred yards away in a temporary barracks of grass. And then, in the middle of the deep dark night, rifles began to go off. The Soldier and the I.O. turned out and went along to the barracks to see what it was all about. Arrived there, they found the British N.C.O. and three or four soldiers. And presently the shooting stopped.

Amongst the more interesting of its attractions Gurin sets in the front row Shatu—the mad woman,—a tall, strapping wench of thirty-five or so. There is no vice in Shatu, but she's heavier and stronger than the average run of men in these parts, and she likes having her own way about things. On this particular night she had wandered into the soldiers' lines, had seen a soldier asleep on the ground with a rifle beside him, and had been attracted by the gun. So she picked it up, and presently strolled off with it. Passing the guardroom, she was seen by the sentry, who at once remarked, "Halt, who goes there?" The lady speaks no English, and failed to understand that the remark was aimed at her. And she proceeded on her way. Whereupon the sentry opened fire. She seems to have gathered that the bullets had reference to her, because she threw down the *bindiga* and ran off, nor was she seen again till next day, when she waited on the Political turned Intelligence Officer, and complained that in hurrying away from the shooting sentry in the dark she had tumbled down and hurt her leg. Her complaint in itself shows how useful it is to have a political officer "on tap," as it were.

The sentry's shots, though they failed to hit the mad woman, went plumping into a herd of cattle that was in the

river meadows, chewing the cud or whatever it is that cattle do of nights. The cattle roused up and went off at a gallop. It was at about this time that the soldiers in barracks retired into the town. The galloping cattle headed straight for a picquet of a corporal and three men that had been posted on a path half a mile out. Corporal Awudu Gerku is a stout fellow of resource. He heard the first firing, and then he heard the thunder of hooves coming towards him. "This," he said, "is a lot of Germans on horses charging the place," and he made his three men lie down and started them off with Independent Rapid.

Then came the end. The sentry left off shooting at the mad woman he could not see; Corporal Awudu Gerku and his picquet satisfied themselves that it was cows and not charging Squareheads on horses that they were shooting at; the main body of the soldiers, having concluded their researches in the town, returned by twos and threes to their own place; the Soldier Bature and the Political went back to their couches, and peace was restored. And nobody a penny the worse of all the row.

There may be some amongst them that read these lines who have never been detailed for duty as intelligence officers in this part of Africa. For their benefit—and I beg pardon of all others—I may say that the work of an intelligence officer is very highly paid, is gratefully appreciated, and suitably, by the best and highest in the land, and is in itself a light and agreeable way of doing patriot service. For confirmation whereof, apply to any of the people who first detail and then employ their fellow-men for this job. A man goes to sleep one night just an everyday ordinary sort of person, and wakes next morning to find that he is an intelligence officer. He is very probably made a temporary local lieutenant, and is senior to all non-commissioned officers. It is much to be feared that here and there amongst the men whom fortune has thus wantonly, and for no merit that they possess, singled out for favour and advancement, there have been one or two disappointments. I have the cases of some such in view at this moment.

The duties of an intelligence officer are various. Sometimes he is tested thus wise, it being assumed that the I.O. is sitting down within easy reach, say twenty yards, of AUTHORITY. Movements are taking place, troops coming and going, munitions, news coming in from various sources, and so forth. AUTHORITY keeps all wropped in mystery. Required—the I.O. to find out as much as he can of what's toward. One man I knew passed this test with flying colours; afterwards he told me how he had done it. Really it was very simple. He sent his steward down to the market in the native city, with orders to hear all the news and bring it back. After an absence of half a day back came the steward with circumstantial details of the movements then in progress a long way

off, of the movements projected locally, of the point on the road which important munitions on their way up had reached, and so forth. AUTHORITY had preserved all this information with great success from its own junior European officers, but there had been a leakage somewhere, and so every thieving drunken scallywag in the native market was in full possession of news that AUTHORITY took much pains to keep from its own people.

It is held by some to be a harder thing to get information out of AUTHORITY than from the average native Intelligence *wallah*. Perhaps it is; certainly it is vastly more interesting. At Gurin there was a corps of mounted persons known popularly as the Yola Mounted Fut. They numbered a dozen, were fairly mounted, until you stripped off the saddles and had a look at the ponies' backs—and carried each a lot of clothes, a bunch of futile-looking spears, and a very fierce countenance. They were led by a man called Zarumai, his qualification being apparently that his horse had a bigger sore on its back than any of the others, and that Zarumai himself carried more clothing and a much fiercer expression than any of his followers. These excellent people used to jingle forth of a morning, three to each road, and very picturesque they looked. Horses used to prance a good deal — that's worked with the cutting bit — and turbans used to stream out. Like Gray's ploughman, they used to wend their weary ways back to Gurin just as the day was departing. They never brought back any news at all. They were not in the habit of going more than four or five miles out, and their coming back weary and dust-stained after a strenuous day of squatting in the shade three or four miles away was an artistic triumph. As time went on something of their method became known to the I.O. Zarumai and the Mounted Fut were a little coy at first in discussing their scheme of work, but that coyness presently wore off. It then came to light that the only one of the band who had ever seen a single enemy in the course of some months' "scouting" was Zarumai himself. He had been titupping along with a few friends one morning—entered a village—came round a corner — saw a couple of German soldiers loading up a donkey with loot — and turned his horse round and never stopped once the whole twelve miles back into Gurin. That experience, Zarumai said, set him against doing his "scouting" anywhere more than about three to five miles from Gurin.

There was one extremely useful man, a native trader in a big way of business, till the war came. He entertained strong personal feeling against the enemy. Not long before the wár started he had gone to Garua to trade. He was out for ivory, and had all sorts of nice things to trade for it. He presented himself before the Imperial German Resident, and was politely received. When he asked whether there was

any objection to his trading for ivory, the Resident smiled pleasantly, almost meaningly, and said there was no objection whatever. Then the trader bowed himself out and went to call on the native chief of Garua. He told the chief that he had brought a lot of trade goods and cash with him, and was out to buy ivory, as much of it as he could get. And the chief smiled broadly. "This," said the trader, "is curious. How is it that you smile? I have the permission of the Resident here to buy ivory. When I spoke to him about it, he smiled, and now that I mention it to you, you smile. Why is this?" Then the chief said to him: "The Resident is going home in a few weeks. A month ago he sent orders to all the big men in the districts to bring in all the ivory. They are doing so, and the Resident will take a lot of ivory to Europe with him. But he is not *buying* it. It is a farewell present to him on the occasion of his going on leave." So the trader had his journey for nothing. And it is to be hoped that the High and Well-Born Hauptmann Resident von Pumpernickel got his plunder safely to Hamburg and realised it to advantage.

But the best scouts in Gurin were, when all is said and done, the ordinary *pauvres diables* of the place. You could fix these men up with a mangy goat or half a bag of salt or something of the kind, and off they'd go,—one here and another there,—all about the country within a fifty-mile radius. They were small native "traders,"—and they did very good work. Took their risks, too, though in the nature of things these were not great. Of course if they did chance to bump into a gang of the enemy they lost their gear, and probably got a bang over the head into the bargain. The German-trained native soldier has no idea whatever of musketry, but he can do the Goose Step; and he loots like the brutal sulky wretch that he is. What he wants he takes; what he does not want he breaks, burns, or defiles: and he never fails to maltreat the owner. This procedure of his is safe enough so long as it is exercised at the expense of timid Filani people living in tiny villages scattered about on the plains. Some of the Goose-steppers who were in practice near Gurin, made reckless by a course of looting and murder amongst the Filani, tried the game on a village of Pagans who lived in a hill. But the merry Pagans turned out and flicked arrows, poisoned ones, so hard and so straight that the raiders departed, leaving two of their number on the ground.

This unwarrantable action of the Pagans annoyed the Imperial German soldiery, and they called in the assistance of another gang of their own sort, and the united forces went to see what they could do with their rifles against the flickers of arrows. Their adventure cost them half a dozen rifles, eight soldiers never seen again, and a whole heap of trouble. The Pagans waited for them in a rocky place where there were

many small trees, and they stuck the soldiers as full of arrows as a pin-cushion is of pins. Afterwards they approached one of our people in a very apologetic manner, explaining that some of their young men had got cross with the Germans, and this had resulted. They brought in the rifles and equipment of the men they had dealt with, and went happily away. It is true that no enemy soldiers have been near them since. It is matter for regret that their way of handling these murderous ruffians has not been more generally followed. As things are, the lives of quiet peaceable natives living near the Frontier have been made a hell by the calculated, considered, and deliberate action of the responsible German authorities in turning loose these armed scoundrels to loot and murder and destroy and defile, wherever these objects, or any of them, were possible of achievement.

The Gurin garrison had not been sitting in the fort more than a few days when things began to move. The I.O., by the way, did not shift into the fort — he stopped in his comfortable quarters in the town. Said it gave the natives confidence, and all that. That particular I.O. was seldom at a loss for a reason. And the fort was an exceedingly comfortless place, particularly when it rained, and when the sun shone, and during the daytime and the night-time. From a mass of rubbishy reports it began to emerge that there was, thirty miles away, an enemy force of considerable size, with machine-guns and some mounted people. Time, number, direction, dates, distances, these are matters with which the average native scout concerns himself but little. He hauls the I.O. out of bed at 2 A.M. with the news that the Germans are coming; the I.O. says, "Have you seen any Germans?" The scout says he has. The I.O. asks, "Where did you see them?" and is given some name that refers to half a hundred places. He perseveres, and at the end of much talk satisfies himself that the scout has not seen anybody at all, has not been near the place where he says the enemy is, and has gathered the whole story from an old woman whom he met on the road the day before yesterday. He may feel that he wants to deal suitably with the scout, but if he gives way to that feeling he is a fool. Not another "scout" will he get to come near him with any sort of a tale at all. So, if he is wise, he gives the man a small present, bids him good-night, and returns himself to bed. At Gurin, thrice per night was about the normal number of times for the I.O. to be pulled out. During the day there was a constant stream of people who had seen or heard, or thought they had seen or heard, or knew another man who had, &c., &c. All had to be received and entreated courteously, and little grains of news winnowed from the vast mass of chaff.

Payment was made for news in cash, and the I.O. put a price on each newsmonger's

effort. Even so, a lot of idle fellows saw the chance of getting something for nothing,—what a lure that is for all of us,—and such idle persons used to drop in with any old bit of news that they could get a hold of. The I.O. reckoned most of them up pretty justly, and one day, when the founder and first president of the guild rolled up with a story of having seen, three hours earlier, two German officers and a dozen soldiers at Maio Pampambi, he took action. It took some days, a lot of trouble, and some expense, before it was absolutely established that no enemy had been near Maio Pampambi on the day alleged. But it was established; and then the Alkali took the bearer of false witness in hand. The wretch was first of all beaten, then stuck on a donkey with his face looking out over the animal's tail, and then paraded through the town, an attendant crier making public the while the evil geste that had brought the ass's cargo to this painful and undignified estate. After the ride the man spent three days in the stocks in the market-place. And I never heard what happened to him after that; but I believe he left the town. He was rather lucky to escape lynching—his yarn, when it was first told, set up no end of a panic. The I.O. could not make out what the enemy was after. He had Garua within seventy miles, and an investing force of French and British sitting down there. He had an open road of retreat to the south. He was within fifty miles of Yola if he wanted to beat up the people there. And he had Gurin within a long march. And he went on sitting down. The only thing sure about him was that he was in some strength. Estimates varied between five Europeans with a hundred soldiers and no maxim — the minimum, and thirty Europeans, with ever so many horse soldiers and foot soldiers and maxims to burn. In Gurin there were the fort and the garrison aforesaid, with a dozen loads of field telephone and two hundred and fifty loads of grain.

That was the situation when the Squareheads got on the move: the indications were that they meant to go to Garua. Early in the afternoon three Europeans and thirty mounted infantry went into Sukundi, ten miles from Gurin, and there were confused and confusing stories of strong parties of the enemy at half a dozen places, all within fifteen miles. At sunset the Soldier Bature and the I.O. lay in long chairs beside a great wood fire smoking and sipping and chatting. Just before dinner a man came running in to say that a great number of Germans, all mounted, had just entered his village three miles away. The Soldier Bature said, "I think I shall have to ask you to sleep in the fort to-night, Mr I.O." And then they dined, and many people came and carried the I.O.'s goods out from his quarters and from the town, and down the slope, and through the river, away up to the fort, distant twelve hun-

dred yards or so, on a bee-line.

Six mounted constables were left in the town, in charge of a dozen horses, and their orders were to have all the animals saddled up, and keep a bright look out. If the enemy showed up, they were to loose off a few rounds, make as much noise as possible, and get away with the ponies towards Yola. The I.O.'s principal native *aide* was told to get out to that side of the town nearest to Yola, and remote from the direction of the enemy: there he and his three mounted assistants were to wait and watch out. If the enemy arrived Adamu was to ride a bit away from the town, out into the bush, find out all he could about the strength of the attackers, and send off news to Yola and to the Franco-British force before Garua, forty odd miles away.

It was a glorious night when, at a little before eleven, the Soldier and the I.O. mounted their ponies and moved off to the fort. The moon was almost full, there was just a tiny snap of chill in the air, and everything was perfectly still. The great trees threw queer-looking shadows, and the air was filled with the dry, clean smell of some herb—conditions that make the smoke of your companion's cigar into true and altogether delightful incense. The ponies were sent back from the fort, the *doki* boys with orders to report to Adamu and take instructions from him. It was a good deal of a squeeze into the fort—three Europeans and forty-one soldiers and police; stuffy, too.

Dawn, like sunset, is an affair of a few minutes in this part of the world. Just as it began there was the sound of three or four shots—then silence. A few minutes later the six police, mounted, and each leading another horse, were seen to break cover from the north of the town and streak away across the cultivation; they were out of sight almost at once. Then three mud-coloured lumps came into sight, shuffling along at a great pace across the open, converging upon the town. They came from the south, east, and south-east. Evidently the Squareheads find it just as hard as we do to get useful intelligence from the native scout, because these three lumps shuffled along direct towards the I.O.'s quarters, evidently expecting to find that person asleep; evidently also they knew nothing of the existence of the fort. The Soldier Bature stood with the I.O. outside the wall and watched. He said, "This is pretty grim, there are four hundred of 'em at least, and they've got maxims. Inside, and let's try the beggars at twelve hundred." And in less than a minute the nearest lump of enemy found itself a target for a dozen rifles, all that could be brought to bear. The Squareheads got going at once. Their force consisted of sixteen Europeans, three hundred and fifty native infantry, forty mounted infantry, and four maxims. The whole lot got out of sight into the town "one time": the mounted

people were slung out at a gallop to the northward, got into position and started to advance in attack formation; one maxim was working away in some good cover a thousand yards from the fort; another maxim followed the M.I., and a third got down into the river-bed south of the fort, and came into action at once. The attack was made from the south and from the east. There was a maxim with each, and another S.S.E. This last was the first into action, and did not change position. It was exceedingly well concealed at about eight hundred yards, and from the fort it was not possible even to see the flash when it was firing. In half an hour from the first shot the issue was fairly joined, and the attack was proceeding vigorously all along the line.

The Soldier Bature was himself almost the first to go down. He had the men most perfectly in hand, they were entirely cool and steady, and fired deliberately and extraordinarily well. Passing up and down the line of men at the loopholes, giving the ranges, looking after everything — doing his job, in fact, in the most efficient way possible—he was struck down by a bullet that came through a loophole. The enemy's musketry does not amount to a row of pins: but he always has plenty of maxims, and these are worked entirely by Europeans. The Soldier Bature's work was finished, and complete, though it seemed that he had had to leave it at the beginning almost. The fight went on for six hours more, but he in the first hour had so steadied the men and infused them with his own spirit, that there would have been no surrender, whatever else had happened.

In the meantime Adamu was doing his bit; he took up a position just out of range of the fort to the west, and thence he made observations and sent his messengers: one of his men was in Yola, thirty miles away, with news of the attack within five hours of it being started. He told me afterwards that for some time he thought the fort was on fire, because of the cloud of smoke that hung about it. Presently he realised that it was the dust from the strike of the bullets on the mud wall. Three maxims, plus some hundreds of rifles, playing on rather less than one hundred feet run of low dry mud wall would send up quite a lot of dust.

Another of the Europeans in the fort was hit not long after the Soldier Bature; men were lying where they fell at the foot of the wall. The sun climbed up, and it grew very hot, but nothing could be done for the wounded. The attack was being pressed. The maxim on the east had got into position in the river-bed six hundred yards away. The Europeans were seen trying to get their infantry on, evidently no small undertaking. One tall man in a white suit was busy with a stick. A brave man—he just strolled about when his men were lying down, and drove them on when they were up.

He did not last very long, and a tremendous burst of maxim fire was set up to cover his removal to the rear. On the south there was a maxim within five hundred yards; also the infantry on that side got quite close up; the garrison found half a score of corpses in one lump three hundred yards away from the fort. This southern attack was very persistent, and one European was exposing himself a good deal, whilst none of our people seemed to be able to bowl him over. At length he did go down, and the garrison ceased firing, and set up a howl that Adamu said afterwards he had heard, and he was a good mile away. For a minute or two after the howl the air was full of congratulations: "Sanu Ibrahim," "Gaisheka Ibrahim," "Arziki gareka Ibrahim." Poor Ibrahim got a couple of holes in his stomach before the business ended.

All through the men were extraordinary. They fired steadily as on the range: they laughed and talked and shouted all the time: they stood up to the loopholes, and when a bullet came, and missing the man by inches, started a cloud of dust from the inside of the loophole into his eyes—the fellow, holding his rifle steady in his left hand, in the loophole, would say, in Hausa, "Bless my soul," wipe the dust out, and carry on. The whole attitude of the men at the loopholes was just like that of a man sparring. The same quick duck or side step or retreat from the sputter of dust, and the sharp springy recovery and return to position. Every shot was watched, and whenever one found a billet the shooter was congratulated, noisily, by his comrades. The only thing that gained more notice than a good shot was an obviously snatched off one that hit up the ground hundreds of yards short. But there were very few of these. The man who was responsible was not chaffed by his mates, he was cursed.

The men were nearly all of them Moslems, nominally at any rate,—a veneer of Mohammedanism upon a strong fabric of Paganism. The latter element probably accounts for pervading cheerfulness and a modicum of irresponsibility; the former gives the assurance of Kismet. "If Allah says one's days are ended, to-day the man dies." And the converse is held just as strongly. After the fight a man very severely wounded in the face and neck was lying in a dark corner where it was very hard to get at him. Presently he realised that efforts were being made to shift him as gently as might be. He rolled over, remarked, "Ah ah, ni mutum ne," and managed to get on his hands and knees, and so slowly dragged himself into the open.

The enemy pushed their attack on one side to within four hundred yards; on the other side they were never nearer than five hundred. Their maxims were very well served and they were going all the time. In the seven hours of the action they must have

got off from fifteen to twenty thousand rounds apiece. Their infantry could not be persuaded to come on. The German officers tried hard to drive them up to the fort, but the men were not for it, and towards the end of the fight they more than once broke and ran back forty or fifty yards, and the Europeans had to go and fetch them back again. Finally, at a little past noon, the Squareheads turned it up, and withdrew into the town, leaving, however, a gun and a strong line of picquets trained on and watching the fort. The garrison did not attempt to push matters: they had sustained casualties amounting to a third of their numbers, had two Europeans out of three *hors de combat*, and the ammunition was down to a hundred rounds a man. The gun and the line of picquets made it impossible for anybody to get out of the fort, or even to stand upright and show his head over the wall. Yet a couple of stout fellows, one a police lance-corporal and one a soldier, the first a Pagan and the other a Moslem, volunteered to take each a letter to Yola and to the camp before Garua respectively, reporting the action, and asking for a doctor and medical stores for the wounded. These two went off in broad daylight, setting their rifles on top of the wall and vaulting over. They both got clear: the constable did forty miles in ten hours and got into Yola by a roundabout way. The soldier met three Europeans a dozen miles up the Garua road. These three had with them ten soldiers and three carriers who had been soldiers in the dim and distant past. With this force, hearing that Gurin was being attacked by four hundred men, these three civilians set off to relieve the place, having armed the three ex-soldiers with a pickaxe apiece, being the deadliest thing available at that time and place. They got in at midnight, and the Gurin garrison, expecting to be rushed at any moment by some hundreds of angry enemies with bayonets, welcomed the reinforcement very heartily. Have you ever seen a German bayonet? It is sharp on one side, a cutting edge, and on the other it is a double-toothed saw; a very disagreeable thing indeed.

Shortly after the end of the action there came a fierce tornado, a terrific blast of wind, and dust-storm, and a downpour of rain, with thunder and lightning all complete. The enemy missed the chance of rushing the fort under cover of the storm, as they could have done pretty easily. The tempest lasted an hour, and was followed by an ordinary soft rain that went on till five o'clock. The state of the unfortunate wounded can be imagined. During the action it had not been possible to do anything for them; there were no field dressings available, and of course no medical assistance of any kind. The first three or four casualties had been put into a small tunnel under the wall, and filled it; the rest had to lie

where they fell. Scorched for many hours by a blazing sun, exposed to the blast of the sand-storm, then drenched by the rain, lying in soft mud, theirs was a wretched state. And there was never a man of them groused. When the rain got properly started the tunnel began to fill with water, and the people in it had to be fetched out; it must have been Hell for them, but they never let on.

At three o'clock, after the violence of the storm had passed, graves were dug inside the fort, and the Soldier Bature was buried, with the enemy gun trained on the place and the rain falling; three of his men share a grave alongside his. Towards sunset the rain stopped, and the sky took on that perfectly glorious and gorgeous and utterly peaceful look that it is worth living in Africa to see. The air was extraordinarily clear, and the head of a column was seen moving out of the town, two thousand yards at least away. With followers there must have been six or eight hundred people. They departed in peace, and in silence; the garrison did not even send a cheer after them. That day's work cost the Squareheads three Europeans killed, several wounded, thirty odd native soldiers killed, and more wounded. They left behind quantities of ammunition and equipment, several horses, a wounded soldier who was too close to the fort for them to move him, and their leader's steward. In the town they had murdered three non-combatants, elderly men, unable to run, who had stopped in their houses, thinking that their lives at any rate would be respected. They set to work systematically to loot the town; they stole everything portable; they emptied grain from bins and mixed it with filth; they carefully defiled the grain stores; they broke everything they didn't steal; they took away with them forty women. Failing to catch the I.O. in his house, they yet found all his little library of French and English books; these they took pains to tear up and scatter about,—Kipling and Chateaubriand and Macaulay and Hilaire Belloc were all represented in the scattered and tattered fragments that covered the ground.

Lastly, they caught one young man and hobbled him—that is, they tied his ankles together in such a way that he could walk but couldn't run; then they set this poor wretch to carry boxes of ammunition up to one of their maxims. The fellow had to cross a space of about fifty yards under fire from the fort with each box. He made four journeys, carried four boxes of ammunition, and then went down with a bullet through his head—a bullet that came from the fort. His body, with the hobbles still in place, was found after his murderers had left.

Except as prisoners passing through, Gurin has not since seen any Huns, and does not want to.

FP.

THE COFFIN SHIP.

Of all the ships that traded from the Islands to the mainland, the *Spirito Santo* had the worst reputation. She was known to be a "hungry" vessel; her chief mate was a French creole from Martinique who had been trained aboard a Yankee clipper, and her captain was a Blue-nose who behaved as such. Since, on the outward voyage, the crew generally consisted of men who had made the Islands too hot to hold them, and, on the return trip, of half-dazed sailors who had been doped by crimps, there was a certain superficial variety about it — a variety merely of individuals and not of kind.

The *Spirito Santo* had been a good enough ship in her day, and had weathered a typhoon in the China seas and a hurricane in the Atlantic; but she was one of the earliest steam vessels built, and had started life as a side-wheeler — her paddles having been changed for a single screw and simple engines, of the kind guaranteed to combine the greatest possible consumption of fuel with a correspondingly large waste of steam.

She was a wooden vessel, iron still being looked at askance when her keel was laid, and her lines were those of the true sailing-ship, with bows that bulged out almost square from either side of her cutwater, above which her long bowsprit raked the air. The result was that she steamed as a wind-jammer, with her bows delaying her speed by their large surface of resistance; and went better under canvas, with her screw running free. She was barque-rigged — that is to say, she carried trysails on her fore and main, below the lovely tower of royals, topgallant sails, and topsails which even her stumpy sticks and too wide yards could not make ungraceful. Her long thin funnel amidships looked as though it had got there by mistake, and indeed she belonged rather to the class of auxiliary steam than that of auxiliary sail, in spite of the motive with which she had been conceived. In fact, her trouble was that in a world where steamships, and iron ones at that, were beginning more and more to snatch at trade, and where the great racing clippers still broke records, the *Spirito Santo*, neither one thing nor the other, had become a losing proposition. Her owners grudged tar on her sides as sorely as good kids of meat to the men, and no shabbier trader than the *Spirito Santo* nosed her way from Port of Spain to the Golden Gate. Yet she got there all right, bullied and driven — got there on cheap coal and rotten rigging, though her engines seemed as though they must beat a hole in her straining sides and her planks part from sheer exhaustion. She held together as a coherent

and reliable whole partly because, with all her lack of grace, she was a sweet ship in a seaway if one knew her idiosyncrasies, partly because her skipper could nurse a ship through anything while the hull stayed afloat. And the *Spirito Santo* took some handling, for in spite of her wide yards and tonnage to the tune of seven hundred, she only drew fourteen feet and was as tricky as a cat. Her skipper coaxed her and humoured her, bullied her at just the right moment; in short, treated her as though she had been a woman — only Joab Elderkin would not have taken the trouble over any she-thing of flesh and blood.

Elderkin was the best-feared man in the Caribbean. He had a thin, sinewy frame, and a very soft voice, which he never raised in ordinary conversation, and this gave a curious effect of monotony to whatever he was saying. Never drunk at sea, he was always perfectly sober on land except for the first twenty-four hours after landing, when he soaked steadily. Even his movements were gentle, as though to match his voice, and the dark eyes, deep-set in his prematurely wizened face, held the wistful puzzled sadness of a monkey's. His language was unparalleled for profanity, and to the most hardened there was something of terror in the appalling flow of words issuing on such an unruffled softness of intonation. In those days the master of a vessel had almost unlimited power within the area of his ship's rails. If, goaded by ill-use, a man struck his officer, he was quite likely to be shot straightway, and on reporting the matter the captain would be praised for his promptness in quelling a mutiny at its rising. Floggings with the cat or the yoke-rope, brutal mishandling with knuckle-dusters and belaying-pins, were the quick and common resort on the slightest count, and Captain Joab Elderkin was famous for his technique in all these methods. His ship literally merited the trite description of a floating hell, and one boy aboard her had died of a broken heart. The child had failed in an attempt to get ashore at Frisco, been brought back and flogged at the mizzen rigging, and afterwards turned his face to the dark forecastle wall, refused food, and died. The little incident had added to Elderkin's unsavoury reputation, but it was this reputation which made him a man after his owners' hearts. He was not likely to suffer from scruples, and it is needless to say that the *Spirito Santo*, a free-lance trading from what ports she chose, carried a good deal now and again on which she never paid duty. Her skipper's only form of conscience was his seamanship. The owners might grudge paint, but every bit of brasswork on board shone like gold, and the decks were holystoned till the men sobbed over their aching knees. At twenty-three he had held command of a full-rigged ship trading to China. Now, since the *Spirito*

Santo was becoming more and more of a falling investment, he rarely made the passage round into the Pacific, and, Atlantic-bound, dodging from the Islands to Colon and down the coast as far as Rio, Elderkin was wont to refer to the time when he really had been a sailor. . . .

It was his conscience as a seaman that the owners were up against when they called the captain into consultation over the diminishing returns of the *Spirito Santo*, and proposed to him the course that is regarded by sailors the world over as the great betrayal.

To any one without a nice sense for spiritual values, everything is merely a matter of price, and Elderkin's fee for the loss of his ship, and with her his soul, was higher than the partners could have wished. They were greasy men, with the Spanish strain that too often, in those latitudes, means a hint of the negro as well, and their office was on the outskirts of the dirty vulture-ridden Port of Spain of those days. The room was bare, and upon the blotchy whitewash of the wall there hung nothing but a map and a few advertisements. The mosquitoes sang through the unscreened windows; outside, in the dusty strip of bleached earth between the house and the road, a hedge of hibiscus was in bloom. In the glaring sunshine the flaunting back-curled blossoms seemed afire as they shot their thin vermeil tongues out into the air made so alive with light. To Elderkin, as he sat in the dimmed room full of green reflections from the vegetation without, came the unpleasant thought that it was as though he were underseas, . . . and the flaming tongues of the hibiscus were some evil sea-growth mocking at his plight.

He leaned forward and helped himself again from the bottle of whisky that stood upon the bare table. When he lifted it a crescent of gold fled across the table, slipping back again when he set the bottle down, as a ripple of reflected light runs through water. Elderkin had often seen a gleam like it when watching a small bright fish flash through a pool.

His reluctant mind responded to the kick of the liquor: the dirty little room, the watchful eyes of the partners as they sat on either side of him in their soiled linen suits, no longer seemed so unpleasant to him, accustomed as he was to the sordidness that, if care is not exercised, so soon overtakes an interior in the tropics. His caution still remained to him, and he sounded the scheme at every point, finding the partners prepared, full of urgings, advices, rosy forecasts, cunning details. On the homeward voyage, that would be best, . . . he could take her out in ballast, bring her back loaded to her limit and beyond it. . . . Those were days before the Plimsoll mark, and vessels often left port — even great English ports — so loaded that their scuppers were all

but awash: and not only left but perhaps attempted the passage round the Horn itself. There would be no difficulty about that, but Captain Elderkin must of course not sail from a Peruvian harbour, as the authorities there had an unpleasant habit of marking a load-line on every ship that cleared, and seeing that she did not go above it. Besides, a cargo was awaiting him in Chili, and the partners were prepared about that too. It was to be a double deal,—the actual copper and nitrates, with a small amount of gold, which she would go out to take, was, by arrangement with a certain official known to the partners, to be changed for sand and stones. Just a sprinkling of nitrate at the top, perhaps, since nitrate is loaded in bulk. It was risky, but on the other hand it was a thing often carried through with success in those days, and Elderkin, who knew all the tricks and possibilities of both coasts, could see his way with reasonable clarity. The partners advised Captain Elderkin not to attempt bringing the *Spirito Santo* round the Horn, as he might have more difficulty in saving himself; if the accident occurred on the Pacific side, it would be better, for many reasons. If he were picked up by a passing ship he must, of course, see to it that the *Spirito Santo* was too far gone for salvage, or that would indeed make matters worse with a vengeance. An accident with the steering-gear—they had reason to know that Olsen, the chief engineer, would come in on it—when off a weather shore, would probably be the best solution. But, naturally, there was no need to instruct so clever a sailor as Captain Elderkin in his part of the affair, . . . more smiles and whisky.

Joab Elderkin sat and absorbed it all, with little expression on his sad gentle face, his thin mouth remained imperturbable under the heavy dark moustache, only in his high and narrow temples a pulse beat. As he drank he raised his price, till at last the point was reached above which the partners refused to go and below which he would not descend. At that point they came to their agreement, and Joab Elderkin went out of the office, having sold his only form of honour on a gamble which stood to put him on the way towards attaining a ship of his own. For that was the desire of his heart, and until now had seemed as impossible of realisation as the phantom vessel of a dream. Probably for no other inducement under the skies would he have given another ship's salvation.

. . . . . .

The month of August found the *Spirito Santo*, all sail set, running down the Pacific coast before a north-westerly wind. Elderkin watched the weather carefully, for he had no idea of losing his life, or, for the matter of that, the lives of any of his crew who could be allowed to retain them with safety to himself and the partners. For

there is always the personal equation to be studied in a matter of this kind, and Elderkin had given much thought to the members of his crew. He had hoped, while always fearing the futility of it, that the first mate, Isidore Lemaire, might be kept in ignorance. For a while it seemed as though this were so, but since leaving port Elderkin had felt doubtful of the creole. Lemaire had a furtive way with him at the best of times, a hint as of something that crept and glided rather than walked normally; but then, so had many of his race. He was supposed to be a white — in the expressive Island phrase, he "passed for white"—but on the French, and Spanish, and even the Danish islands the objection to racial mingling is not nearly as strong as in the colonies that have always been English. Also, Lemaire came from Martinique, which after Haiti is the headquarters of obeah, and worse, of voo-doo. Even quite good families in decaying Martinique had dealings with the unclean thing, and St Pierre was known, even among sailors, for a hotbed of strange vices. All this was why Lemaire made such a powerful mate, for the crew, except for the red-headed Danish engineer from St Thomas, were either half-castes from the Islands and the southern continent, or full-blooded negroes; which is to say, that superstition was so part of them that the last vestige of it would only run out with the last drop of blood from their bodies. Elderkin knew better than to penetrate to the forecastle, but he was aware of the bottles filled with dead cockroaches, bits of worsted, and the rest of the paraphernalia for the casting of spells, which hung there. He himself had found that the only way to keep his steward off his whisky was to decorate his locker with a similar charm, and since he had done so had suffered no more from pilfering. All this was obeah, harmless enough, and if now and then a white cock was sacrificed in the forecastle and a seaman went somewhat mad on its blood, Elderkin ignored the matter. But Lemaire was, he knew, suspected by the crew of darker dealings. There had been a rumour that the reason Lemaire left Martinique was because the disappearance of a planter's child was like to be laid at his door, and the rumour was enough to make the niggers cringe before him. This was a master, perhaps the friend of papalois and mamalois, with the power of life and death. Elderkin loathed him,—there are things from which the most hardened white man shrinks, and it would have to be one utterly unregenerate who could dabble his hands in voo-dooism. Nevertheless, the suspicion made Lemaire the best nigger-driver in the length and breadth of the Caribbean, and Elderkin made use of him for that reason. Now for the first time he began to feel the man's peculiarities getting on his own nerves. A word dropped now and again, odd looks from the

protuberant and opaque brown eyes, were making him wonder if the mate guessed, whether it would be better to take him into the secret and trust to his never reaching shore. . . .

They were nearing the Forties when Lemaire spoke. The day was wet, with a strong wind, all the morning they had been driving through tingling veils of rain and spray, shipping green water that slopped over the holds and poured in foaming torrents along the dipping scuppers. All day the wind—which till then had thrummed through the rigging and held the sails in their stiffened curves so steadily that the *Spirito Santo* kept a fairly even keel—had been falling on fitfulness. Loaded as she was, the seas that raced past her, almost level with her deck, seemed higher than they really were. An odd darkness held the air, and through it everything bright — the flashes of foam, a wheeling bird, or rare shoal of flying-fish—showed up with startling pallor. In the second dog-watch, Lemaire came to Elderkin in the chart-room.

Most men have a weakness, and Elderkin's—probably because he never made a confidant of a human being—was the dangerous one of pen and paper. He was making calculations on the fly-leaf of an old Bible which had been unearthed with a lot of other junk from a locker. Calculations about ships—the varying costs of handling a four-masted schooner and a barque, and the advantages of chartering a small screw steamer; calculations of routes and cargoes, of many things, but always calculations. . . .

The curious darkness had swamped the chart-room, and made the discoloured clasps of the Bible and the brighter brass of the ship's fittings gleam out; made the captain's always pale face seem waxen, showed two sallow flames in the mate's ophidian eyes. For a moment the two men looked at each other in silence, then Lemaire spoke.

"I see you figger it all out," he observed. "Don't forget me, dat's all. I come in on dis, my friend. *Sacré nom de Dieu*"—on a sudden flash of menace—"did you think I was going to get nothing out of it? Or perhaps you was going to drown me, eh?"

Elderkin had got to his feet, and was watching the other man steadily. When he spoke, his voice was as low and tired as ever.

He asked what the blank the blank mate thought he was talking about. Lemaire explained that he was talking about the scuttling of the *Spirito Santo*, and that the captain knew it as blank well as he did.

"While the ship remains afloat, kindly remember that I am in command, Mr Lemaire, and address me with proper respect. If you do so, I'll discuss business with you. If not, I'll see that you go to hell along with the ship. Savvy, you herring-gutted son of a frog-eater, you?"

Lemaire savvied. He had grown sickly-hued with anger,

but he spread his dark hands in apology, so that the pinkish palms seemed to flash in the unnatural gloom.

Then they got to business. What Elderkin had feared had happened — Lemaire's suspicions were aroused in port over the loading of the *Spirito Santo*, over the paucity of the stores taken aboard, over the many oddnesses that reveal themselves to a cunning mind when something beyond the normal is in progress. Elderkin remembered the night when Lemaire and the successfully bribed official had gone together, as he had then thought, to a rowdy-house—it must have been on that occasion that the stronger man won definite confirmation from the weaker. Now there was nothing for it but to let Lemaire in on the deal—for the present.

"You are not thinking of a storm, no?" asked the mate, when both men had laid their cards upon the table; "with our boats we should not stand a chance. . . . A fire, perhaps? We are car'n some cotton, sah, and it might have been packed damp."

"Too risky. I thought of all that. We can only trust our boats to take us a little way. I must pile her up near the mainland. There's a reef I know of——"

"A reef!" scoffed Lemaire, "and you de best skipper on either side! Who d'you s'pose believe dat? Not unless we first had an accident to de engines, anyway. What about Olsen? Does he—know?"

"Yes. It could not be carried through without him."

"Ah, I see. . . . Only poor Lemaire was to be kept out. . . . And dis reef?"

"It's uncharted. I found it years ago. I had reasons for not wanting it known where I'd been and I never reported. It's a tricky place; the sea don't break true on it, sets in sideways. Beyond it's flat water to the shore. No risk of salvage; it's out of the course, and a wooden ship goes to pieces at once, anyway."

"Where is it, dis reef?"

Elderkin drew his pencil down the chart to an indented bit of coast not a couple of degrees below the fortieth parallel. Lemaire sweated to think how near he had been to risk.

"If this north-west gale holds, and we were to have an accident which made her unmanageable," went on Elderkin, "we should be driven ashore, on to that reef. Or at least we could always say so afterwards."

"We might arrange so's Olsen was neber able to give us de lie . . ." suggested Lemaire, glancing sidelong at the other.

"If needful."

But when the tussle over terms was ended and Lemaire had gone forth, Elderkin swore to himself that it was the mate who should never again see the Islands rise above the rim of the sea. He cursed, and for a few moments as he sat at the chart-room table he allowed himself the luxury of hating the course on which he

had embarked. A man cannot give his soul into the keeping of any one idea, whether that idea is embodied in another person or in a mode of life, without suffering a profound disturbance if he violently part from it, and for many years now Elderkin's soul had been one with his ship. She was ugly, cranky, she bore a name as a hell-ship that he had earned for her, but together they had won through much; men had died on her, blood run upon her decks, misery and pride and drunkenness and strange doings permeated her very frame. She was as the flesh of his flesh, and only that dream-ship of his own which floated in a mirage before his mind could have made him unfaithful to her. He was in the position of a man who has lived with a despised but deeply felt mistress, and who at last thinks he holds the ideal woman, the bride, the untouched, within his grasp, at the price of the severance of the old ties. And, like a reproachful ghost, as though she were dead already, the appeal of the old reprobate of the seas kept pricking at him, day and night, throughout the ordered watches that drew her towards her end.

He had sold his soul to gain his soul, a not altogether uncommon bargain. "If I can only have this one thing I will Be Good ever after," is a cry that must have caused amusement above and below as many times as there are mortals upon the earth. In Elderkin's case the "one thing" was a ship of his own, and now that she loomed at last over his horizon, he found that it was this old Hagar of the high seas, the mistress and not the wife, who, in spite of himself, absorbed his consciousness. All the ugliness of his betrayal of her was thrown sharply into notice by the compact with his mate; and, shot by a sharper distaste than ever before, he covered his eyes for a minute, in an attempt to focus his will undistracted. It was successful; Elderkin, little as he knew it, was an idealist, however perverted a one, and idealism was with him in this venture, beckoning to him in the dip and curtsey of a dream-vessel, her bright canvas burning with perpetual sunlight. . . . He dropped his hands and straightened himself, and his eye fell on the Bible in which he had made his calculations, and where he had also noted down his covenant with Lemaire. It had fallen open, by the chance movement of his arms, at a different place, and he found he was reading a few lines before he knew what he was about.

Too imperceptibly for him to have noticed the progress of it, the light had strengthened in the chart-room, for a stormy sun had penetrated the gloom, and the heavy black letters stood out distinctly on the yellowed page. A sudden flash of memory leapt through Elderkin's mind—the memory of a day long ago in his childhood.

He had been brought up in New England by a rigid old

grandmother until he ran away to sea, his Nova Scotian blood too strong for him. But his mother's Puritan strain was with him, nevertheless—had held by him if in nothing else but a certain Biblical flavour in his oaths. Now there flashed across his mind a dreary Sunday when he was a little boy—one of many like it, but this particular one had stuck in his memory. And, probably because of the yellow light flooding the chart-room, the memory surged up at him, for on that Sunday he had escaped to the barn, although with no better spoils than a book of Old Testament stories, and lain there, heels in the air and elbows among the straw, reading the story of the Flood in just such a stormy yellow glow as this. A gale had followed, rain-laden, and his childish mind had half-feared, half-hoped, that a flood was coming, down which he could float triumphantly in some makeshift ark . . . as to his grandmother, he might rescue her and he might not, but if he did, of course she would be so overcome with gratitude and admiration that she would never again abase his dignity with a certain limber cane. Then, in a lull of the gale, the gleam had shone out once more, and by its light he read on; read how God had promised there should never come a flood over all the earth again, and had made a rainbow as a sign of it. Rather dull of God, he thought in his disappointment. The storm raged so that he dared not slip back to the house, not because of any fear of the elements, but because his grandmother would notice if his clothes got wet; so he had stayed on, his mind thronged with imaginary adventures, till the storm was over. Then he had gone back to the house, feeling curiously flat after the excitement wind always produced in him. A faint yet pictorially a vivid memory of that strained hour of varying emotions swept across him now in a moment's space, as he gazed at the page before him. The next moment he understood why,—it was not only the light that reproduced that afternoon of long ago, but also the words at which he was looking—the two things together had fused a section of time from thirty years earlier into a section of the present. He read the verses through, but a few phrases knocked at his mind to the exclusion of the rest. The word "covenant" especially, so hard upon his pact with Lemaire, seemed to stare up at him. . . .

"And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood. . . . And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you. . . . I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant. . . . And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: and I will remember my covenant,

which is between me and you . . ."

Elderkin sat at gaze like a man in a trance, unable for a few moments to disassociate that hour in the barn from the present—not sure which was the present, so vivid was the illusion and so sharp the knock on his dormant spiritual sense. His hands, which were trembling oddly, went out to grasp the edge of the table, not for the physical support, but more that a common sensation should reassure his mind. Then he rose, and backing away from the book as though it could spring at him, he went out.

The wind had dropped, but the *Spirito Santo* was rolling her bulwarks — those solid structures which were traps for all the water shipped—into the confused sea that the dead wind had left. She was travelling badly, her heavy load robbed her of the elasticity which would have enabled her to rise to the onslaught of each successive wave.

The *Spirito Santo* boasted no bridge, the roof of the chart-room, which was situated on the poop, just forward of the mizzen-mast, doing duty instead. The wheel, which was uncovered, was set at the break of the poop, between the rail and the chart-house. Elderkin climbed the ladder to the top of the chart-house, and then stood there, struck to sudden stillness. He never glanced at the binnacle to see if the man were keeping the course, or noted the wiry figure of the mate as he tramped back and forth; his whole being was arrested by the portent which held the sky. And all the long-dormant but never wholly cast-off beliefs of his childhood awoke in his blood.

A curtain of luminous ashen-pink cloud was drawn across the sky from horizon to zenith, absolutely smooth and unbroken, and against it arched a rainbow, spanning the horizon and coming down mistily into the sea. So close the opalescent feet of it looked that it seemed as though the ship's bows were heading through the phantom portals of some new world, but high in air the summit of the curve, clear and burnished as cut glass, looked infinitely far away. As Elderkin stood at gaze, particles of sun-bright cloud floated slowly across the right of the arch, like little morsels of golden wool.

Elderkin, his fingers clutching a wet stanchion, was aware of a curious feeling coming over him. He felt he had seen just that effect before—that curtain of ashen pink, the rainbow against it, the flock of little golden-bright morsels floating slowly across it, . . . and had seen it in connection with something of vital importance. Yet, try as he would, he could not capture the thought — memory—dream—whatever it was, of which he was so sure in the back of his mind that he felt it waiting for him to recognise it every moment. . . . All sorts of bewildering little half-memories flitted across his mind, and refused to be captured or placed. Queer irrational little things they were,

incongruous and wildly senseless; he felt dizzy chasing them, but he knew if he gave up concentrating even for an instant, the whole thing would be gone. Yet piece together these half-memories that pricked at him he could not, they were as elusive as moths and as unsubstantial. He knew that there was one key to them, and that if he could only find it they would become sense, though not sense of this world—it was as though they were in a different focus and on a different plane, but they would become clear if only he could find the key. . . .

As he stared, the little particles of cloud in front of the rainbow slowly dissolved and melted into the ashen-pink of the cloud-curtain, from that too the glow was fading, and the arch itself began slowly to die into the air. Elderkin found himself in the chart-room again; he sat down and shut his eyes, striving to remember. . . . He could not recollect having dreamt just such a thing, and yet the feeling aroused in him was exactly that provoked when, on the day following a very vivid dream, it will keep on intruding in fragments, each time to be shaken off as the mind readjusts itself to the normal after the moment's blurring of edge. Suddenly it occurred to him that he must have seen that effect only a few days before, and he opened his diary, in which, his vice being pen and paper, he noted down matters not important enough for the "Remarks" space in the log. He hunted the pages back and forth, and in the midst of his futile search his mind seemed to give a click, and he was switched back into the normal again. He sat looking at the book in his hands, and realised that he had never seen that especial effect before; that he had most certainly never noted it down—the mere idea that he had seemed as silly as a dream when the mind has struggled fully awake—though when he had first thought of it and taken the notebook up, it had seemed as possible as the same dream when the sleeper is in the midst of it. He still felt curiously dizzy, though his head was clearing slowly: things seemed commonplace around him once more; he could not even remember distinctly what his sensations had been. He only knew that in that trance-like state, of a moment—of æons—earlier, he had known he had seen before that which he then saw, and seen it connected with some thing he could not catch. Whether he ever had seen it, perhaps on that incompletely remembered day of storm which had flashed back to him on this afternoon; or whether, already worked up by his conscience, by the interview with Lemaire, and, to his sensitised mind, by the words in the Bible, the sudden effect on him of seeing that bow set in the flaming cloud had produced a brain-storm, he could never know. He would have thought it blasphemy to wonder whether nothing more spiritual than the

driven blood in his skull was responsible for that queer switching off the track; but whatever it was, the effect of it on his awakened moral sense was prodigious. He did not doubt that he had received a divine visitation, that for him the heavens had been decked with pomp, that the workings of God, in particular and exquisite relation to himself, were manifest in the ordered sequence of that day. His own stirrings at the violation of his solitary code had gone deeper with him than he knew, preparing him for further troubling; then the pact with Lemaire, driving in all the distasteful side of the business more keenly still, the coincidence of that word "covenant" coming on the heels of his covenant with the mate, that word used in the Bible passage to suggest the eternal pact between man's soul and its Creator, the memory it evoked; and, to crown all, the finding of the seal of it set in the heavens themselves — all these things rushed together, fused, and struck into his being.

He fell on his knees in the chart-room and praised God—praised Him in the phraseology of his Puritan forebears, as he had heard Him praised when a little boy, whose heedless ears had not seemed to take in the words battering about them.

Joab Elderkin had got religion. He had been converted.

When he scrambled to his feet he came to, so to speak, on a different sphere from any he had ever known. He seized up the Bible again, his hands shaken by the strongest passion known to civilised man, the only acquired attribute, besides the making of fire and of intoxicating liquor, which marks him off fundamentally from the other mammals. He read again the passage that had flamed into his ken earlier, he read the promises of the Almighty, he read of how men were called the Sons of God. He saw himself and all his fellow-humans not merely calling God Father by a kindly sufferance towards adopted children, but as beings created of the same substance, their souls as much made of the essence of God as their bodies of the essence of their earthly fathers, and the thought mounted to his head like wine. The swift darkness of the tropics had fallen, but full of his new conception of his fellow-creatures—"every living creature that was with him" of the verses — he, when he opened the chart-room door, flared forth into a night of gods.

All the next day the glory held, both in the air and in Elderkin's mind. The Pacific was rainbow-haunted; phantom archways through which the bowsprit seemed about to soar; pillars of prismatic colour that melted into air; broken shafts of it that flashed out in every sunlit burst of spray upon the decks. Even in the two plumes of spray for ever winging from either side of her cutwater a curve of burnished colours hung, as though piercing down into the

translucent green, through whose depths the drowning surf was driven in paler clouds. The wind still held off, and the *Spirito Santo* made what way she could under steam and canvas, through the confused seas that slopped aboard her and buffeted her from all sides at once. It was of supreme significance to Elderkin that the north-westerly wind on which he had counted for his purpose should have died away in the selfsame hour that, as he phrased it, the wind of the spirit blew into his soul. The barometer was falling rapidly, in spite of the stiller air, and he had had the royals and outer jib and gaff-topsail stowed. What with her reduced sail, the influence of her steam, and the lumpy seas, the *Spirito Santo* was behaving her worst, riding sluggishly with a heavy reluctant motion, as though she hardly considered it worth the effort of keeping her blunt nose above water at all. Elderkin felt her sulkiness, and it seemed to him as though, instead of helping him to save her, she was possessed of an evil spirit bent on thwarting him. He watched her closely, and spent the day on the poop, and though he said little, every one was aware of something new and strange about him. The crew commented among themselves on his abstraction and the poverty of his abuse; Lemaire thought he held the key to it, but Olsen, the freckled Dane, grew uneasy. He was having trouble with his engines, which should have been overhauled long ago, and would inevitably have been renovated this trip had it been undertaken with a normal objective. If the voyage were unduly prolonged, he would be hard put to it for fuel; it would not take very much to send his boilers crashing from the rusty stays that held them; added to which every degree farther south, now they were in the Forties, diminished their chances of safety. As there was no longer any wind to contend with, Olsen was all for steaming towards shore at once, for his sea-sense combined with the barometer to tell him of trouble ahead.

Olsen was a taciturn creature, who cared for no one in the world but his half-caste children — bright, large-stomached little creatures, whom he had left playing in the dust in front of his gaily-painted wooden house in St Thomas. For their sakes he put up with his fat slovenly wife, and her swarms of relations of various shades of brown. It was only for the children's sake that he had stuck to the *Spirito Santo*, for it suited him to be able to get home as often as he might; and even when the *Spirito Santo* did not touch at St Thomas, he could always pick up with a mail-packet or a sailing-ship of some kind. It was his ambition to send both boy and girl to New York for their education, now that the Civil

War had made it possible for any one with a touch of colour to make good. Therefore he nursed his crazy engines as though he loved them, but he decided that the sooner the accident occurred the better. In the second dog-watch he, as Lemaire had done the day before, went to Elderkin, who had gone into the chart-room.

He found the captain with an open book in front of him: he was not reading, but making calculations on the margin. He glanced up at Olsen, and his tired eyes brightened for a moment. Then—

"Ask Mr Lemaire to come here," he ordered, "and come back yourself."

Olsen made his way to the top of the chart-house, where Lemaire was pacing full of anxiety, and delivered the order. Lemaire came with a mixture of civility and an assumption of confederacy in his manner, but Elderkin took no more notice of it than of Olsen's waiting stolidity. He closed the Bible and confronted the two men.

"Well, Olsen," he said, "you were wanting to see me about something?"

"It is about this affair," answered Olsen; "there is no good to be got by waiting, sir. I tell you plainly, my engines will not stand so very much. And the way she is loaded, if we come up against anything in the way of a sea——"

"And you?" asked Elderkin of the mate.

"I am sure dat what Olsen say is right. It must be now or never."

"It is going to be never," replied Elderkin in his usual soft tones.

The two men stared at him, then the quicker Latin flashed into speech. He demanded, with a lapse into Island *patois* now and again, what the blank blank blank the captain thought he was doing. Elderkin sat through it unmoved.

"I will not speak to you as you have just done to me," he began, "because, hairy forsaken Frenchy as you are, you are still a son of God, even as I am. Praise the Lord with me, for He has shown me into what an abyss of sin I had fallen. Do you hear what I say? I am captain aboard this ship, Mr Lemaire, and I order you to praise God for having delivered us while there is yet time."

Lemaire stared at his superior officer in total silence for a moment instead of complying. Then he turned to Olsen. The freckled Dane grasped the situation the first. He saw that the skipper was not trying to do them down, as Lemaire, when he found his tongue again, accused him; that this was not some deep-laid trick to keep them out of the profits. Olsen had seen many religious revivals in the Islands, and he knew the signs.

"See here, Mr Elderkin," he said, stepping forward, "I've my side of it to think of. I've not suddenly got holy. I'm thinking of my children,

same as I was before. You've never thought for any one but yourself. I only shipped this voyage because it meant being able to do what I want for them. I've only stuck to this hell-ship for them. There's been things done aboard here that would have sunk the ship if sin could sink her. You can't clean your bloody ship by talking of God now. We all made an agreement, and let's stand by it like men. Sink the ship, sir, and the top of the sea'll be the sweeter for it."

"I've been a sinful man all my days," agreed Elderkin, "but my eyes have been opened, the Lord be thanked. . . . I have been saved, and by the grace of God I mean to save the ship."

"It'll take more than the grace of God to keep my engines working," commented Olsen.

"And suppose we refuse?" asked Lemaire. "We are two to one, Mr Elderkin. Remember, sah, if the captain is sick, it is de mate who take charge of de ship. . . ."

"Mutiny? You? Do you imagine, Mossoo, that I couldn't hold my own ship against any half-breed afloat?"

"Damn you!" screamed the mate, his skin darkening with his angry blood, "if you not take care we will say you are mad, yes, mad. De men have only got to hear religion coming out of your face to believe it. De ship's not safe, and we must scuttle her now, d'you hear?"

"The men!" repeated Elderkin. "Let me tell you there never was a dago crew yet that I couldn't lick. I'll save this ship against the lot of you, I'll save her against herself — God helping me," he added.

"But we shall be ruined, all of us," urged Olsen. "What do you suppose they will say to us at Port of Spain, Mr Elderkin? They won't be pleased to see the *Spirito Santo* come crawling into the roadstead with a faked cargo and all that good insurance money wasted. . . . We shall all be ruined men, I tell you. . . . What will become of us?"

"We shall never get into Port of Spain," spoke Lemaire, "we shall never round the Horn. It's coming on to blow now. She can't live through it, I tell you. It's sinking her now and saving ourselves and making a damn big pile out of it, or it's all going down togeder."

"Then we will all go down together," said Elderkin; "if my repentance is too late, the Lord will not let me save the ship nor yet my soul."

"I don't give a curse in hell for your soul, or any one else's," cried the mate; "I tell you it's madness. Only a miracle could keep de ship afloat."

"There has already been one miracle aboard her," said Elderkin. "Who are we to set limits to the power of the Almighty? It is a small thing to keep a senseless structure of wood and iron afloat in comparison with making the blackest of sinners see the true light, which the Lord has done

between two dog-watches. Yesterday I was profaning the Book with my calculations of sinful gain made out upon its pages, to-day I have been calculating how many years I have spent in following my lusts, and were the years as many as the waves of the sea, I have prayed the Lord that the weeks of striving in front of us may wipe out the years."

"He is mad," remarked Olsen philosophically.

Lemaire turned swiftly on the engineer. "We must take charge," he urged in a low voice, his back to the captain, "and then you must do what I say. We will run her close inshore, and . . ."

Whether Elderkin heard above the growing clamour of the ship or not—for the woodwork had begun to crackle like a wheezy concertina and the slap of green water breaking sounded in a scurrying frequency—he knew what the mate was planning. A rim of something cold on the back of Lemaire's neck made his speech fade on his lips, and he and Olsen stood motionless while Elderkin spoke, Olsen's light eyes looking at the fanatical dark ones above the gun.

"I am master of this ship, and what I say goes, or I'll put daylight through your dirty body," said Elderkin, pressing the muzzle in till the dark seamed skin on the mate's neck turned greenish in a circle around the iron. "As for you, Olsen, you're white, though you're a Dutchman, and I look to you to stick. What about the engines?"

"I am sorry about this," replied Olsen, with seeming inconsequence; "but what must be will be. I will do the best with my engines. But if ever we see port again, I have done with you and your ship and your religion. I have my children to think of. I will go below."

And he pulled the chart-room door open. As though his doing so were the signal to some malignancy without, a sudden blow of wind struck the ship; a crash sounded along her decks, and on the moment a surge of water flooded into the chart-room. A sudden squall from the south-west, such as sometimes arises like a thunderclap in those latitudes at that time of year, had caught the *Spirito Santo* in the confusion of the heavy cross sea. That first blow heeled her over, . . . over, over, . . . it seemed as though she were dipping swiftly far beyond the angle of safety, farther and farther. There was nothing to be done for the moment but clutch on to whatever was nearest; cries of terror from the dagos sounded thinly even through the clamour of wind and sea and crashing of gear. Then came that agonising moment when a vessel, heeled over as far as possible, seems to hesitate, remains poised for the fraction of a second that partakes of the quality of eternity, between recovery and the hair's-breadth more that means foundering.

Then, with a groaning of timbers like some mammoth animal in pain a thick jarring

of machinery, and a clattering of everything movable aboard her, the *Spirito Santo* came slowly up again. If that gust of wind had held a minute longer she would have rolled herself, her faked cargo, and her huddled lives, down towards the bed of the Pacific; sins and religions, material hopes and spiritual aspirations alike marked by one fading trail of air-bubbles.

Elderkin found he was holding Lemaire round the waist, while Olsen was on his hands and knees in the lather of water streaming off the floor.

"The Lord has decided," said Elderkin; "we have now no choice. Get below, Olsen." He was heaving himself into his oilskins as he spoke, ordered in his movements but speedy, considering the terrible lurching of the vessel. His fight to save the *Spirito Santo*, to save her against herself, had begun.

He found her topgallant-sails thrashing out like blinds from a window, for the topgallant-sheets had carried away, while the foresail and fore-topmast-staysail were like to flap themselves to rags. He bellowed his orders above the clamour of the ropes and guys, that were all shrieking and wailing on different notes as though the ship were suddenly endowed with the gift of tongues. The men fought their way up the rigging, and, lying along the slippery yardarms, wrestled with clew-lines that whipped about as if possessed, while the wet and iron-hard canvas beat back and forth with reports like gunshots. But the men succeeded at length, and Elderkin felt that the first tiny stage in his great battle was won.

Already the sea was running in great slopes of blackish green, streaked and scarred with livid whiteness; from the poop the whole of the ship was filled with a swirling mist of spray that wreathed about the masts, only parting here and there to show one boiling flood of broken water that poured across the waist from upreared starboard rail to submerged port scuppers. The forecastle was flooded, from the forecastle head, as the ship pitched, a torrent poured on to the hatches, and when, the next moment, she dived forward, rushing down a long valley that seemed to slope to the heart of the ocean, two rivers poured out of her hawseholes. Elderkin, as she dived, called down the tube — the only means of communicating with the engine-room except the still more primitive one of messengers — to stop her. And when it looked as though she could never recover to meet that oncoming mountain, but must drive into it and be smothered, her bows rose once more, up and up, till they raked the swollen clouds, while a wall of whiteness thundered past on either side. As Elderkin called for "full" again, his face was as calm as that of a little child.

All that night the storm increased, and wove air and water into one great engine of destruction, and all night Elderkin stayed lashed

to the rail of the chart-house, which was momentarily in danger of being washed away like a rabbit-hutch. It was impossible to keep the binnacle alight, and no stars were visible; steering was a mere groping by the feel of the wind. Dawn seemed hardly a lightening, so dark hung the massed clouds, of a curious rusty-brown colour, packed one above the other, overlapping so as to form a solid roof. Only between their lower rim and the slate-grey sea, an occasional glimpse of horizon showed where a thin line of molten pallor ran. Brown, white, and steel-grey, with the masts and rigging sharp and black against it all, and the decks, dark with wet, now refracting what light there was as the ship rolled one way, now falling on deadness again as she rolled the other. With the dawning, Elderkin was unlashed and took the wheel himself, aided by a seaman, for it took two men to stand its kicking. To him came Olsen, still phlegmatic, almost as black as one of his dago squad. Gripping the poop-rail with one hand, with the other he laid hold of the captain's oilskin, and leant as near as possible to shout his news, but even so Elderkin could only catch a word here and there.

"Won't stand . . . stays parting . . ." came to him.

"Keep her at it," he yelled back.

But a sudden shout came from Olsen, while the man at the wheel literally turned colour and closed his eyes. Only Elderkin, with a look that seemed queerly of exultation on his face, stared ahead to where a vast wall of water, so high it glimmered greenly, was rolling towards them over the broken, tossing sea. That was exactly what it looked like, as though it were a body distinct and separate from the rest of the raging water, some great fold pushed up from the antarctic region and urged across the ocean, on and on. . . . It bore down on the infinitesimal ship and her clinging ants of crew, bore down blotting out the sky, till suddenly it was so near it became one with the rest of the sea, as though the whole surface were curving over into a hollow sphere. It thundered upon them, then, its glassy concavity reared to an incredible height, it toppled over and broke into one roaring cataract of foam.

What happened next no one remaining in the *Spirito Santo* could ever have told. Three men were washed overboard; one had his legs so broken that the splintered bones drove into the deck where he was hurled down. There were a few long-drawn seconds when all thought she had gone under, for the rushing sea had climbed level with the chart-house roof, while the air was so thick with spume and spray it would have been difficult to say where the sea left off being solid and became fused with the wind. Then, with a roaring and a sucking like that when a wave, shat-

tered, streams off a cliff, the water poured off decks and hatches in long lacings of dazzling white. The *Spirito Santo* still lived.

But it seemed she was mortally wounded, for she was jarring all her length, even the twisted stanchions vibrated as though some malignant force within her had broken loose; and when Elderkin tried to bring her head up to the wind, the wheel spun in his hands as easily and uselessly as a child's toy.

"The rudder . . ." cried Olsen; "it is gone . . ."

Elderkin retained his clarity of aspect, and gave his orders collectedly; only when the dago crew clung miserably to any support and refused to obey, he pulled out his gun and drove them to their stations. Hove to, with only her spanker, close-reefed main-topsail and fore-staysail set, there was a chance of keeping her off the coast till the sea should quiet down enough to allow of a jury rudder being rigged. Meanwhile, as the men were setting the sails, she rolled horribly in the trough of the sea,—rolled fit to break her heart. Elderkin, on the poop, shouting at the men reefing the main topsail, saw something that for the first moment of horror seemed fraught with the supernatural. Years of neglect, of rust, of corrosion from salt, had in reality gone to bring about what he then saw, with dishonesty and money-grubbing meanness behind the rust and corrosion. For, with a scream of ripping iron and the sharp snapping of guys, the *Spirito Santo* rolled her funnel clean off at the root, the casing along with it. It crashed upon the deck, and the next moment was swept overboard, carrying away the port bulwarks. A gust of heat and a murky torrent of foul smoke blew flatly from the cavity that gaped in the ship's vitals, then a flood of water, luminously pale in the growing daylight, filmed across the deck amidships and poured over the ragged rim of the wound. The *Spirito Santo* rolled upon the water, little more than a helpless wreck.

Lemaire, who was lying on the top of the chart-house, gripping the rail, screamed out that they were done for; even Olsen, turning his blackened face to the captain, shouted that the game was up; as to the dagos, each yelled where he lay. This time Elderkin had to use his gun before he could get the ship hove to. At sight of one of their number lying limp in the scuppers, the crew obeyed once more, while Olsen, sticking by his caste, and Lemaire, seeing still a faint chance for life, worked with them to cover the jagged hole with the stoutest timbers they could find. What was left of the fires was drawn, the planks over the hole shored up from below with timbers, tarpaulins stretched a-top of all, and fastened down by a great batten bolted through the sodden deck; and, during all the hours of work amid wind

and water, Elderkin watched the ship, saw that she did not come too much up into the wind nor fall off into the trough of the sea; kept the men at it when, time and again, they would have given up. Gun in one hand and Bible in the other, he read out threats of the Almighty's, intermingled with his own. And at last the jury-hatch was finished, and a further stage of the battle won.

Now came the most trying hours of all, when there no longer remained anything possible to do, when hands fell on inaction, and bodies were free to feel sore and cold, and minds were vacant of everything but an animal despondency. Olsen lit a fire on the iron floor by the boilers, and here, for the most part, the miserable men crouched during the rest of the day and the following night. Elderkin, after he had slept the sudden and overpowering sleep of the worn-out man, awoke to his first doubts. As long as there had been continuous need for action, that and the stern joy of a fight had shut out everything else for him; now there was nothing to be done but hoist the inner jib when she came up too much into the wind and lower it when she paid off again, a need so recurring it was almost mechanical, he became as much a prey to inner questionings as his ship was to the winds. What tormented him was the thought that if the *Spirito Santo* had foundered in this south-west gale, all hands would have inevitably been lost, whereas had he kept by his agreement to scuttle her earlier all could probably have been saved. Was he then become a murderer by having decided as he had, and would it have been more righteous to keep on his evil course? Elderkin, to whom, for the first time, the lives of his men had become of a value other than commercial, was tormented by the thought of the three washed overboard by the great wave; and the curses of the man who had died a few hours after his legs were shattered re-echoed through his mind. It was not so much that these men had met death—Elderkin had too often stared it in the face to think overmuch of that—but that they were cut off in the midst of their sins, with blasphemies on lip and soul. Elderkin's creed allowed of no gracious after-chances; he saw the entities he had known and bullied in the flesh, as having become blind particles of consciousness burning in undying fires. . . .

With dawn and a further dropping of the wind, which had been lessening all night, he searched again the pages of his Bible, and he followed the instinctive trail of human nature when he thrust niceties of values from him, and determined to hold by what was right and wrong at the springs of his action. When he went out on to the poop and met the crisp but now friendly wind, saw the glitter of sunshine on peacock waves, that still broke into white crests, but without

malignance, he knew that the Lord was on his side. How was it possible he had ever thought otherwise? He must indeed be weak in the ways of grace that his first testing should awake such questionings within him. As the weight of despondency and sick dread fell off him in the cold sunlight, Elderkin flung up his arms and shouted for joy. Lemaire, crawling up, found him on his knees upon the top of the battered chart-house, improvising a prayer of thanksgiving.

All that day the men worked at rigging a jury-rudder and patching up the port bulwarks. Then Olsen, who kept them as doggedly at it as the skipper himself, conceived a plan whereby his engines could once again play a part. He collected sheet-iron and stout pieces of wood, and with these he contrived a jury-funnel, fitting steam-jets at the base to maintain the draught to the furnaces. The freakish erection held together well, though it looked oddly stumpy in place of the thin, raking smoke-stack. Olsen secured it by guys of iron chain. At last all was complete, and once again a plume of dirty smoke trailed from between the sticks of the *Spirito Santo*. The men slept as they fell, but by then the rudder and smoke-stack had converted her from a blind cripple into an intelligent whole which could work independently of the direction of wind and current. A further stage of the battle was won, and with every victory Elderkin felt greater confidence in the Lord and in himself.

By the next day it had grown very cold, and the men began to prepare shapeless and weather-worn garments against the bitterness of the Horn. Even Lemaire, who kept on repeating sullenly that they could never round it, knew that the only chance now was to carry on, and, his face seeming to pale with the first breath of the cold, hugged himself in a great padded coat. Food was already beginning to run short, and only by serving out double quantities of the raw West Indian rum were the men kept going at all. The ship herself could be heartened with no such encouragement, and although she was now snoring at a fair pace through the smother of foam that kept the lee scuppers covered with a running river, yet her foul sides and wicked loading absorbed half her speed. She was a wet ship at the best of times—now she was sodden to her trucks, and the showers of icy rain that blew down on the westerly gale every now and then wetted in a worse fashion, for rain-water chills to the bone right through oilskins. One day an exhausted Cape pigeon fell on board, and the little bird was eaten raw by the first man who got to it. Sometimes a great albatross sailed on level unmoving wings around the labouring ship, and mollymawks screamed and circled, but none fell a victim to the hungry crew. There was a certain amount of salt junk left aboard, but the chief diet was nothing

but hard tack, and that was mouldy. Elderkin remained unmoved by any consideration save how to get her round the Horn, and he made Olsen save the dwindling fuel as much as possible for the attempt, lest they should be kept beating back and forth for weeks till exhaustion of ship and men sent them under. So the days went on, and the great Cape Horn greybeards rolled up with glistening flanks and white crests that broke and poured down them in thunder. Cold rains, wind squalls, her own condition and that of the men aboard her, all fought against the *Spirito Santo* till it seemed as though the strongly-set will of her captain were the only thing that kept her alive—alive and obedient, however sulky, to the intelligence that drove her.

Still she kept going, steaming and sailing into the stormy sunsets, till at last she was off Cape Stiff itself, showing unspeakably bleak and gaunt through the driving mist; only now and then were the black cliffs visible, going down into a smoking line of foam.

If a bad storm had hit her off the promontory nothing could have saved her, but the wind, though the strong westerly gale of the "roaring forties," held less of violence than ordinary; and although she rolled till it seemed she would dip her yards, and the water could hardly be pumped out of her as fast as it poured in, yet she pulled through, as she had pulled through the south-westerly gale and the disasters that followed. Elderkin, who had somehow expected his great tussle off the Horn, felt an odd sensation that was almost disappointment.

On looking back afterwards, Elderkin saw that the voyage was, as it were, divided clearly into two by the passing of the Horn—on the Pacific side the actual physical blows of material damage and storm, on the Atlantic the more wearing struggle against spiritual opposition. The men, headed by Lemaire, began to murmur.

For one thing, the last possible scrap of fuel had been burned by the time they were passing the Falklands, and they were left with nothing but their canvas to carry them home. As far as keeping her steady went, she was better under sail than steam; and also, like every true sailor, Elderkin felt more in harmony with the weather when using only canvas. For a steamer goes independently of the wind, ignores it, shoves her nose in its face, and the wind pays her back by becoming an enemy; but a sailing-ship lives by wind, humours it, coaxes the last hair's-breadth of it, and the wind, flattered, ignores how all the time it is being managed and made of use.

But the sails of the *Spirito Santo* were old and mildewed, she carried little spare canvas, and, worst of all, if they should come into a calm, those on board her might starve to death before they sighted help. All these things the men knew, and knowing, began to rebel. Lemaire, too, no longer seconded

Elderkin, and he and Olsen bore the burden of nigger-driving alone — and Olsen, although he was loyal, made his discontent apparent. A terrible loneliness of mind fell upon Elderkin. He felt himself accursed of all men, but he still held on; each successive incident of his fight, instead of wearing his resistance down, went to strengthen it. The crisis came when after weeks of crawling and standing still, hurrying on with any advantage of breeze that presented itself, yet afraid to carry too much canvas, the *Spirito Santo* was nearing the fortieth parallel once more.

It was a grey, squally day, with the south-westerly wind keeping the sails bellied forward, and the gusts of rain driving so hard that the water in the brimming scuppers was lashed to paleness; the pumps were in pretty constant use now, and the fetid bilge-water washed over the decks in floods of a dark-reddish colour, as though the *Spirito Santo* were bleeding internally. A sullen moodiness held air and sea and the mind of those who looked; that grinding reluctance of the *Spirito Santo* had passed into the men's bones; they moved slowly if ordered to do anything, their shrunken flesh was a mass of sea-boils, and, since the lime-juice and potatoes were exhausted, scurvy had broken out. Elderkin himself looked like some medieval picture of the Baptist; he had grown a beard that came to a sparse point, and his sombre eyes glowed from behind the disordered streaks of hair that fell over them, while his skin, so tightly stretched over the bones, had taken on a waxen texture. To the men who came crowding on to the after-deck to voice their resentment he had the air of a madman, as he stood erect at the break of the poop, his figure dark against the grey pallor of the sky. For a few moments he stood scanning them quietly, and they stared back at him. In marshalling them where he had, Lemaire had made an error in psychology; for the mere fact that they had to look up to Elderkin on the poop affected both him and them unconsciously.

"What do you want?" asked the skipper quietly. Lemaire stepped forward as spokesman.

"We want to get off this ship and make for shore, dat's what we want, and dat's what we'll do."

"Ah . . . how?"

"We'll take de law into our own hands. If we sink her now we can make for de mout' of de Plate, or we might be picked up sooner. I've told de men; I've told how we was all goin' to be rich an' safe and would have been trowin' our money around ashore by now if you hadn't got de praise-de-lord bug in your head——"

"What Massa Lemaire say quite true, sah," called out a burly negro, whose black face was greyed over in patches from disease, "an' we aren't goin' to stand dis any longer. If you won't sink her we're

goin' to, or we'll all be dead men."

"We're dead now, dead and rotting," shrieked the bo'sun, on a sudden note of frenzy that pierced the air like a thrown blade; "who ever saw live men rot?" And he held up a hand which scurvy, on an open wound, had literally rotted so that the tendons hung down like weed. He shook the maimed thing at Elderkin. "Look at this . . ." "And this . . ." "And this . . ." came up to Elderkin in angry shouts. The men, intoxicated by the sudden venting of their wrongs, began to swarm up the ladders to the poop deck.

Elderkin felt new life urge through his veins, the pressure of the dead weeks behind sloughed off him, as the thinning veils of sleep drop away from the waking consciousness in the morning. He did not pull out his gun, but kept his hands in his pockets and faced the snarling, tentative, ugly pack of them.

Then he talked, not raising his voice more than was needful for the grinding and creaking of the ship's labour and the weary complaining of the wind-tortured rigging.

"So you'd mutiny, would you?" he began in his soft voice; "well, first you'll listen to me. Down off that gangway, you there, . . . that's better. Well, I guess I know what you men are saying to yourselves—that I'm one man against the lot of you, and now we're no longer fighting to keep the ship afloat for our lives you can easy get the better of me. That's what you're thinking, isn't it?"

A murmur of assent, half-threatening, half-shamefaced, came from below. To Elderkin, looking down, the men appeared as blots of deeper colour against the pale glimmer of the wet deck; their upturned faces had the abrupt foreshortening that imparts a touch of the ludicrous, but those faces were set in folds which told of hardened determination, behind the swellings and boils which glistened in the watery light, so that Elderkin could see each disfigurement as clearly as pebbles in a pool unshaded from the sky.

"The mate tells you you'll get a lot of money if you go home and say you've sunk the ship. You won't. He will, as Judas did for betraying his Lord, but you'll just be got rid of, if you don't keep your mouths shut. You're wrong, as you've been all your lives, as I've been till now. But I've a stronger man on my side than all of you herring-gutted sons of a gun would make rolled together. I've the Lord on my side. You think nothing of that, do you? The Lord's up in Heaven and won't notice what you do, and you ain't feared of the likes of Him anyway. . . . Aren't you? Why d'you think it is you have bloody sacrifices there in the fo'c'sle—oh yes, I know about it all—why d'you suppose you cringe to that nigger there" —pointing to the mate—"with his black history of murdered

children and flesh eaten in secret when the sacred drum beats at the full of the moon? Why d'you suppose you're scared sick of a dirty bug and a bit of wool in an old bottle, or of my Bible that I've set up on a shelf? It's because you know there's something behind —behind your ju-jus and behind my ju-ju. . . . You not fear the Lord! Why, you fear Him with every devilish performance you concoct. You're afraid all the time — of the something behind. And my ju-ju is greater than your ju-ju, so you're more afraid of mine, and of me. Could your ju-ju bring you through the great storm alive? All of you—and that damned baby-eater there —you was all yelling at your ju-jus and they couldn't wag one of their accursed fingers to help you. Who saved you and brought you out alive? White men and the white men's God. You know there's something behind, and that what's behind me is bigger'n what's behind you. . . ."

He suddenly pulled his hand out of the capacious pocket of his coat, and the men cowered swiftly, but instead of a gun he held his Bible out over the rail, threatening them not with its insignificant fabric but with its unknown import. A couple of Jamaican negroes fell on their knees and writhed upon the deck, making uncouth noises, their eyes turning palely upwards, their limbs convulsed.

"Praise de Lord!" they yelled, "praise de Lord wid us, brudders! End of de world and judgment comin'. Save us, massa, save us. . . ." And a dago from the southern continent fell to crossing himself and gabbling his prayers.

"You fools!" cried Lemaire, thrusting through the heaving knot of men, "don't you listen to his talk. Talk won't fill our stomachs or cure our skins. How's he going to feed you? Ask him dat."

"Yes—what are we to eat? Give us food and we'll keep on!" shouted the bo'sun. "Can your God make food?"

"My God provided manna for the children of Israel in the wilderness, and He'll provide for us now if we trust in Him. He will send us meat for our bellies and drink for our throats."

"How . . .? Where is it, dis food?" taunted Lemaire; and Elderkin, his hand pointing, answered, "There. . . ."

The men swung round to gaze, and saw, a fugitive gleam of sunlight on her shining tower of cotton canvas, a great four-masted American barque beating to windward only a few miles away. Elderkin and his ju-ju were saved, and Lemaire's vision of dollars was routed by the men's vision of food. The distress signals were run up, and by that night the *Spirito Santo* carried enough provisions of a rude kind to last her, with care and luck—meaning a rigid discipline of practically wreck-rations, and fair winds—to see her safely home again. Elderkin thought that at last the testings of his faith were over, that the weary ship would blow towards port on a divinely-appointed wind,

and that his sacrifice and conversion were accepted on high. For the image he had had in his mind on that day of revelation in the chart-house had been of one Titanic struggle, not of this succession of conflicts which sometimes rose to crisis point, but more often meant fighting against the terrible depression of day after day's inaction, driven half-crazy by the unceasing moaning of the rigging. Sustained bad weather gets on a sailor's nerves not because of any danger but simply by dint of the repetition of noises; there is only one thing more unbearable to mind and temper, and that is to be becalmed. Thought of any such happening was far from those on board the *Spirito Santo*, for the south-westerly wind urged her on past the Plate, and then a baffling head wind blew out of the treacherous skies, and for over a week she beat back and forth, making hardly any headway. The rations were still further reduced, and then, just as the men were beginning to make trouble again, the *Spirito Santo* caught up with the south-west trades. Once again she made the seas roar past her, for now, regardless of her depth in the water, Elderkin made all the sail he could. Day after day slipped past with the slipping foam, and the gaunt creatures aboard felt a stirring of relief. And then, in the Doldrums, they ran into a dead calm. . . .

Only any one who has been becalmed on a tropical sea knows the terror that it is. Of all feelings of helplessness it is probably the most acute. Without steam or motor a ship is as powerless as though she were anchored to the sea-bottom with iron cables. Men have gone mad of it, and men did go mad of it in the starving *Spirito Santo*. She lay, as famished for a breeze as they for bread, upon a surface of molten glass, her sails limp as a dead bird's wing, the pitch soft in her seams, and the only sound in the circle of the horizon the faint creak-creak of her yards against the masts. Cabins and forecastle were unbearable, yet on deck the vertical sun had driven all but the thinnest lines of shadow out of being. The nights were almost as hot as the days, and always the false cross gleamed from a cloudless sky, and the true cross swam up lying on her back and trailing the pointers behind her, slowly righting herself as she rose, and driving the pitiless brilliancy of the Milky Way before her. The drinking-water, what there was of it, stank; and the dried mouths of the men could hardly manage the mouldy hard-tack which captain and crew shared alike. And there was nothing to be done, nothing that could be done. The men were past revolt now, they could only shamble dizzily about. There was nothing to be done,—except pray, and Elderkin prayed though his lips moved almost soundlessly. He thought much these days, and he remembered — probably because of the dead stillness around— an old seafaring fable that in the calm heart of a cyclone life

is to be found — that there birds and butterflies of every size and colour crowd, till the air is hung with brightness. He saw the individual soul of man as the hollow calm in the midst of life, cut off by the circling storm from all other air, and told himself that it could be the refuge for beauties of praise, . . . he strove to make this aching solitude of mind, wherein he was, rich as the fabled heart of the cyclone. . . .

Then, just as the first faint breath made her ripple the water at her bows, he discovered that, worn out by her successive batterings, the *Spirito Santo* was literally falling apart. He looked over her side and saw that she was spewing oakum from her seams, while she settled lower and lower in the water.

The discovery acted like cool wind on Elderkin—it was unthinkable that they should perish now, not so very far from home, after all he had won through, and he prepared to meet this disaster also. He had prudently kept one last cask of rum unbroached, and this fluid life he now served out to the men. Then he drove them, as before with gun or Bible, but this time with rum,—drove them to the task of frapping the leaking ship. Four great chain cables were passed under her and hove tight with Spanish windlasses on deck — a series of giant tourniquets to keep in her life. And when that too was accomplished, it was as though the power above at last was satisfied, and the wind strengthened that was to bear the *Spirito Santo* home.

Nearly six months after leaving port with provisions enough for one — with her rotten ratlines hanging in little tags, her jury smoke-stack idle between the patched sails that seemed as though one more puff of wind would tear them from the battered yards, her spewing sides kept together with cables, and her broken bulwarks level with the water —a nightmare vessel manned by ghosts — she crawled into the roadstead at Port of Spain.

. . . . . .

For a few years after, a ragged white man haunted the drink-shops of the Islands and hung about the ports—a man without a ship. For the owners of the *Spirito Santo* were broken by the safe return of that faked cargo, but they passed the word round that her skipper was to be broken too. He who had been so self-controlled in the old unregenerate days now drank steadily, but it was only when he was very drunk that he talked. And even then it was difficult to make out what he said—it was all such a jumble of some strange fight between two ships, and of how the ways of the Lord were so mysterious that it was often impossible for a man to tell upon which side righteousness might be found.

F. Tennyson Jesse.

THE SPECIAL CONSTABLE.

BY SIR J. GEORGE SCOTT, K.C.I.E.

WILHELM DER GIFTMISCHER prepared for quarter of a century to have the sword thrust into his hand. He had made arrangements for a great many things: war in the air, war under the sea, war on the principle of the speculator who "salts" gold fields and the burglar who poisons the watch-dog. He bought properties and coal-pits and quarries and laid them out with gun emplacements and stocked them with shell. He set all his professors to discover the best way of poisoning the winds of heaven. He is not a *sahib*.

He had to be met by people who had not prepared for anything, not even to win at the next Olympic Games. They have done it in a variety of ways, which can never have been contemplated by William the Unclean. There are the munition workers who carry planks from a barge to a motor-lorry, and then take them off the motor-lorry and stack them up somewhere else. It is as well to know how long they have been at it, for when they have just begun, they are apt to be stiff in the limb and short in the temper after work hours, and particularly lurid in their views about William II. There are the ladies clad in khaki who march about. They march extremely well, but nobody knows what they do it for. When they are dismissed they take independent action and present white feathers and frilled petticoats impartially to league footballers and to cadets at the Royal Military College.

There are the waitresses who have replaced men of military age at the clubs. They talk cheerfully to bishops and learned professors, and listen unabashed at military clubs where most of the conversation is contraband of war.

And there are the Special Constables.

The Special Constables of 1914-15, and until further notice, are an entirely new product. Before the days of William the Unclean they had only been sworn in on occasions of emergency and tumult, and for a matter of a few weeks. Moreover they were only enrolled here and there in a few towns. Now they are found all over the country, in rural districts as well as in centres known to be full of aliens and of those who detest all aliens, and they are enrolled, like judges and the criminally insane, during His Majesty's pleasure. This is justified by the fact that Germans are found everywhere, like germ-bearing flies, and are as penetrating as poison gas. The Darwinian theory of mimicry comes in, and naturalised Germans are as sinister as the

little round beetles that get into salads in the East and pretend to be capers. There are commanders who remember Mafeking nights, and darkly hint that the Special Constables will not be disbanded for six months after the war, and possibly not then.

Probably nobody knows how many Special Constables there are, but we are vaguely told at intervals that they have run into the second hundred thousand. This uncertainty is not due to the intervention of the Censor, or the obsession of the Press Bureau. The Special Constables are not flattered by being told that a knowledge of their numbers would be of value to the enemy. As a matter of fact, it is because their numbers vary from day to day. It is laid down, with a variegated sanction of five pound fines and a nebulous assertion, that everybody is liable to be called upon to be a Special Constable, that a man once enrolled cannot resign without permission and good cause shown. The actual fact, however, seems to be that many do retire for reasons which subdivisional inspectors consider altogether flimsy, but commanders and the Disciplinary Board do not venture to dispute. They simply delay a decision for many weeks, and then demand the return of the warrant card and equipment. This implies a Special Constable Clerk, and the Special Constable Clerk is dictatorial on paper and vituperative over the telephone, and usually fails because of his zeal.

The estimation in which Special Constables are held varies enormously. To the comic artist they are as useful as whisky and mothers-in-law, and up-to-date *Revues* cannot do without them. The Home Secretary and the Chief Commissioner of Police send them periodical circular letters which seem to be badly translated from a French polite correspondence manual, and extol their patriotism and self-denial in the language of the company promoter or the house-agent. The average citizen, when he meets a Special Constable, always wants to know how many captures he has made, smiles toleratingly, and does not wait for a reply. The Special Constables themselves have the most widely differing views as to the use that is made of them, and express it in language which varies from the incoherent to the inconsequent.

When Special Constables were called for in August last year, there were a great many who joined the force because they thought the need of watching the Germans in these islands was most urgent, and far beyond the numbers and powers of the police. The duties they were set to do very soon disillusionised many. Up till Christmas they had little to do but stand for four hours at a time on bridges and at water, gas, and electric works. That would have seemed quite right and proper if they had been alone, but they were

not alone. On the contrary, there were many who complained that they were surrounded by uniformed police. Not only were the regulars there, as they always had been before, but there were constant patrols, and altogether it seemed as if the Specials themselves were being kept under observation.

The Special Constables were desperately full of zeal, and started off with the axiom that the function of the police was to arrest people, and that any one who failed to do this was neglecting his duty and discrediting his subdivision. A few conversations with point duty men and patrolling sergeants, however, revealed the somewhat disconcerting fact that there are quite a number of uniformed police, with respectably long service, who have never made an arrest. This was distinctly depressing, for to stand on a bridge in a perpetual shower of smuts from passing trains, or only from engines making up goods trains, from ten at night till two in the morning, or from two to six in the morning, is an experience which to most minds calls for incidents to while away the time. When in addition to this it was discovered that many of the railway companies and works kept their own night watchmen, there was a great drop in enthusiasm, and quite a number of men demanded that they should be put on the "emergency list" and only called out when there was really something to do. The revulsion of feeling was most conspicuous in those who had arrested the night watchmen as loiterers, and had only released them when the uniformed police explained that they had known them for years. The regulars were much more tactful in their language than the night watchmen were either before or after the incident.

There were some Specials who were determined to do something to justify their own existence and the expectation of their families. One remembers the story of the regimental sergeant in camp who resented a grin on the face of some one who was looking at the sentry and himself, and fell upon him thus: "What are ye laughin' at? If ye're laughin' at naething, ye're a fule, and if ye're laughin' at me, I'll pit ye in the gairdroom." This summary way of commanding respect suggested itself to sundry amateur policemen, and they were extremely annoyed when the station sergeants would not frame a charge.

This excess zeal on the part of the Specials led to several comical discoveries which ought to have extended their view of the weakness of human nature. Quite a number discovered after some weeks of three days on and three days off, that sundry male householders, when they came home at night, were in the

habit of stopping their taxis nowhere in particular, getting out, and then walking to their homes.

This seemed so suspicious that the fact was noted down and reported at the station, and the result was that some quite inoffensive people, mostly with foreign names, were watched by succeeding reliefs. The inquiry which resulted after repeated observation brought in every case reasonable explanations. Some said they made a practice of it in order to get a little fresh air and exercise after late office hours. Others, not without hesitation, admitted that it was done to delude their wives into the belief that they had not gone to the luxury and expense of a taxi, but had frugally come home by bus. Since most Specials are married men, this was an explanation which immediately excited sympathy and called for apologies.

At first the Special Constables were on duty both by day and by night for periods of four hours at a time. The day point duty men soon found out that the majority of the population, who did not regard them with irritating curiosity, passed by with a still more exasperating smile. There were dear old ladies that stopped to praise their public spirit and rambled on about every conceivable thing, including the desirability of seeing that men in khaki did not waste the time of housemaids out to post a letter, and the urgent necessity of preventing nursemaids from occupying the entire footwalk with perambulators three abreast. Perhaps this was less disconcerting than the frequent request that a special eye should be kept on No. So-and-so, "only a street or two off," both for possible burglars and probable "followers."

But there were quite a number of the general public who either took it for granted that the amateur constable was as well informed on all manner of subjects as the professional, or victimised him out of calculated malice. A great many of the Specials in the north-western district of London are stockbrokers and others connected with "the House," whom the war has left with abundant leisure. When one of these was abruptly asked to say where the nearest doctor's or the nearest chemist's was, the nearest place where a marriage licence might be procured, or notice of banns lodged, or where a midwife might be found, he usually had to confess his entire ignorance. If the questioner was in a hurry, he made no effort to conceal his contempt; if he was not, he did not hesitate to convey the good advice which is always so unpalatable. Still more puzzling was the request to be informed, say in Camden Town, which was the nearest way to Westminster Bridge. That, no doubt, would have been equally complicated for a member of the regular force, but he would have had previous

experiences of the kind to guide him in the matter, and at any rate was pretty certain to know where the next fixed point was where further information could be got. The suggestion of the tube or a bus, connecting with other bus lines, only resulted in caustic criticism, or the blunt inquiry why not a taxi, coupled with a request for the fare.

It was probably to give the Special Constables an opportunity of gaining experience that they were made mere shadows of the regular force for the first month or two. They got plenty of hints and reminiscences. The most insistent advice was never to enter a house if it could possibly be avoided. No amount of shrieking, or the intimation from an excited female that some one was carrying on awful, would avail to excuse them from liability to an action for trespass, they were told; and above all, they were to let drunks alone. It is not an offence to be drunk, and it requires infinite patience and tact to persuade a drunk man to go home.

The spectacle of a Constable in a fur coat and suede gloves arguing for a matter of an hour with a loquacious labourer on a Saturday night was always a delight to his companion on the point. It was a steady grievance with the Special Constables that uniform gave the regular an unfair advantage, for it often happened that a single word from him sent off a man who had been in turn aggressive, lachrymose, patriotic, musical, and argumentative for thirty minutes with the officer who had only an armlet. "Best to take them good-naturedly," was what Policeman Omega said; "just think what your feelings would be if you were that way yourself." But it is not so easy to be good-tempered when the mildest form of address is "fat old geeser." The mere suggestion that the Special is as well-nourished as some members of the force annoys some men very considerably.

August and September last year were exceptionally fine, and there were some men who actually liked duty from ten at night to two in the morning. But when the wet weather began, and it was clear that there were going to be no riots, and not a single London Special Constable had made any arrests, there were a good many medical certificates sent in. Therefore it was found advisable to give up day duty because there were not enough men, and at the same time it was thought politic to make wet nights less depressing by the simple process of telling Special Constables to keep an eye on motor-cars that went too fast, or had too brilliant head-lights. They were to stop them if they could and let them go with a warning. If not, their numbers were to be taken and reported at the station.

The results were not altogether satisfactory. Some men were so zealous and so eager for occupation that they brought in the numbers of a

dozen or more cars every time they were on duty. This seriously annoyed the divisional and subdivisional inspectors who had to inquire into the matter. Some of them were blandly patronising; some of them were covertly offensive; some laboriously pointed out that the Specials instead of assisting were seriously adding to the work of their regular brethren. The motoring public was either speechless with indignation or boiling over with profanity. Elderly ladies took the obstructors for motor bandits and shrieked to their chauffeurs to drive on. Ladies of the profession were freezingly contemptuous, or advised them to go home to bed and even offered to drop them there. Khaki-clad men on motor bicycles either went on like a whirlwind, or stopped to threaten courts-martial, in language which suggested that they were just back from Flanders, or had qualified in the dialect by the High Proficiency Standard. Not a few owners went indignantly to the station to complain, and threatened an action for obstruction or damages for losing a train. Fussy idiot was the description which came most readily to their lips, and there was always an immediate crowd which stirred up strife by facetious criticism and suggestions. Now and then the car-owner held up was a brother Special Constable, and then there was a good deal of the good advice for which every one is so grateful. The point officer was advised to study speed rates, and parried this thrust by acridly suggesting that it was imperative to show an indubitable example. But after a time glaring headlights became much less frequent, and people in a hurry learnt to know the points where zealous Special Constables were stationed and "made concessions to their officiousness."

After the first Zeppelin raid in the Yarmouth neighbourhood, when the Special Constables all over London received an emergency call, the people who write to the newspapers, having got tired of the bo-peep methods of the Press Bureau, started a clamour that aliens, registered and otherwise, were in the habit of flashing signals across London, either from congenital iniquity or for the sake of practice against the time when the great air raid against London comes off. After five months or so of service quite a number of the force were beginning to protest that they were being treated like children, and that their services were of no practical value to anybody. Therefore the Chief Commissioner of Police took counsel with the Admiralty, and that Department decided that the Special Constables might make useful recruits, and at any rate they would not need uniform and would not get any pay. They were no longer to be divided into squads but into crews, like the anti-aircraft men, and they were to note and mark down by compass all unusual lights, conspicuous either by their brightness or

their colour, or because they were intermittent, or because they appeared at unusual hours.

New-found energy brought tribulation to a lot of people. The top storeys of Consumption Hospitals were called on to explain why the windows were wide open, the blinds drawn up, and strong light streaming out unabashed. Sundry amateur photographers who used alternately canary and red fabric in their developing rooms were mercilessly cross-examined. The chief victims, however, were heedless servant-maids, and in a good many cases the wives of Special Constables who wished to time their husbands. Apparently a great many of the young women were too lazy to switch off the lights when they went to bed, or did not relish making their way there in the dark. At the same time they did not pull the attic blinds down, so that their carelessness proclaimed itself to observers far away on the northern slopes, or on the tops of lofty flats.

The owners of the houses were first of all suspicious, or incredulous, and then indignant. The number who were grateful for the probable saving in lighting bills was too small to warrant a belief in the loving-kindness of human nature. The slaveys who were taken to task, for the most part protested, some violently, some tearfully, about the offence against their modesty implied by the irruption of strange men to see about the light. There were many who were reported by staid but conscientious investigators to be brazen huzzies and much too quick-witted and nimble with their tongues. There is credible information that many of the Specials told their wives of what they had discovered, and that the rule of lights out caused a good deal of friction in households which up to then had been reasonably peaceful. It was not always the maids who protested with the greatest bitterness, as sundry zealous citizens confided to one another.

There were other complications. All Special Constables, who could afford it, had supplied themselves with pocket electric lanterns or torches. Some of them knew a little about the Morse code, and this induced others to try to learn it. The best way clearly was to have constant practice, and so men began to carry on conversations from their stations on high flats with members of their crew posted at other places. This was soon noticed by nervous householders, on the look out for ubiquitous German frightfulness and possible aircraft. They lost no time in communicating their discovery to the nearest police constable, and the result was a great deal of work for the Criminal Investigation Department. There were even some passers-by in the streets who noticed the flashings, and put an immediate stop to it by bellowing out: "Come down out of that you anywhere in Germany blackguard."

There were also minor

troubles. The Specials paced backwards and forwards on the zinc-covered roofs of the flats, and the noise excited the top-storey residents to fury. There were formal written complaints to headquarters and heated arguments in lifts and on the stairs, in high-explosive language. The observers on duty were addressed as merry-andrews, and they riposted by denouncing war-like elderly gentlemen in dressing-gowns as contemptible slackers. This was somewhat of a relief to the ordinary monotony of duty, but it could not be allowed to go on, so a remedy was found in the purchase of rubber overshoes, to be passed on by the man on duty to his relief. These were not supplied by Government. Government in fact has exercised the most rigorous thrift in this department at any rate. It has never supplied anything beyond the equipment and, at the starting of the movement, a sum of two shillings to provide stationery for the duration of the war. It was therefore left to each subdivision to supply the goloshes at its own expense. Obviously these had to be got to fit the biggest man, and there was therefore not a little flopping discomfort for those with small feet. It is a melancholy fact that very shortly after the silent shoes had been got, watching for high lights was stopped. The Admiralty having, after a good many weeks, supplied the weather-proof compass cards, which the observers had had up till then to manufacture for themselves, suddenly announced that it was satisfied that there was no authorised night signalling. Meanwhile, however, several military units, which had been practising signalling, apparently without informing the Admiralty or anybody else, had had night passages with zealous civilians. The Specials maintained that they were there for the purpose of reporting all signalling, and the military retorted in the language of a rude and licentious soldiery that lorded it *über Alles.*

It was enjoined on every man as soon as he came on duty to telephone to the Admiralty to report that he was there, and to get correct Greenwich time. The Admiralty staff was either worked to death or was lamentably short in the temper. At any rate it took longer and longer to get an answer, and probably this as much as anything else put an end to the system of making Special Constables extra-assistant anti-aircraft men. There were some who regretted it, for though the tops of flats were unpleasant places on cold nights, there was plenty of incident to pass the four hours, and there was the inestimable asset of proclaiming that the Specials were doing for nothing what the anti-aircraft men neglected to do on five shillings a day.

Meanwhile the National Guards had taken over from the regular police part of the duty of guarding vulnerable points. There were not enough of them available to do the

whole guarding of extensive works, and so Special Constables had a share of the duty. This proved absolutely unsatisfactory, for the men in khaki felt bound to assert themselves, and brusquely challenged all reliefs, and sometimes even the men on guard. There were diffident Specials, with no experience of alarums and excursions, who did not like this, and, above all, had misgivings about the degree of control the National Service men had over their weapons, to say nothing of their nerves. There were hot-headed Specials with a profound conviction of the service they were rendering, and the proud consciousness that they were doing it for nothing, and the khaki-clad men were not. There were venturesome sergeants and reckless inspectors who unhesitatingly met the challenge of "Halt, who comes there?" with "Visiting rounds," or even "Grand rounds." There was at least one waggish individual who took a pugnacious Irish terrier on guard with him. The challenge was met with an unhesitating attack by the dog, and the sentry had to take ignominious shelter in the guardroom. Therefore after a time the mixed guard was dropped, and it almost seemed as if there were no more use for the Special Constables, for the guarding of a bridge or two here and there was regarded as mere window-dressing, and superfluous at that.

It was here that Tirpitz the Truculent, Reventlow the Rabid, and William the Unclean came to the rescue. The Zeppelin raids began, and with them the night calls. In the early months of the war all ranks of the Special Constables had suggested an emergency call or two for the sake of finding out what number of men would turn up and how long they would take to do so. There was also the seemingly unquestionable advantage that it would give the men an idea of what their duties would be, and so would make things go quicker when there was a real call. But the authorities would not hear of it. They were convinced that it would greatly alarm the populace. The solicitude of the Censorate and the Press Bureau for the sensibilities of the populace has been one of the most pronounced features of the Great War. A great many people would be scared into their cellars, and it would be difficult to persuade them to come out again. A great many more would pour out into the streets, and it would pass all human ingenuity to get them to go home again. Probably excitable people would suggest the raiding of aliens' houses, and there would be infinite trouble. They pictured to themselves melodramatic interludes, quite as unlike what really happened as Mr Winston Churchill's visions of the dirigibles being stung to death by swarms of hornets.

The London Specials responded to the call on the occasion of the Yarmouth raid with high hopes. They came flying to their stations in

cars and taxis and on motor bicycles. Those with cars of their own flew out again to collect those not so well provided and not accessible by telephone. The percentage of those who turned out was quite extraordinarily high. Patrols that went out into the streets were perhaps disappointed to find that the few people there were about took not the smallest interest in them. The reserve at headquarters discussed William the Unclean as if he were a pestilence carried on the viewless winds. They were annoyed to find that the methods of *jiujitsu*, which they demonstrated as likely to be of use against German heavyweights, were matters with which all their comrades had been familiar for many months. Finally, between one and two in the morning they began to be very hungry. A fatigue party went out to knock up all the bakers, grocers, and provision-dealers round about. They came back with a cheddar cheese, a number of loaves, and a basket of eggs, and they were just unpacking these triumphantly when a message came from headquarters to dismiss. The ration convoy was left with the whole store on its hands, for nobody was hungry enough to eat bread and cheese at two o'clock in the morning except under compulsion. Claims sent in to Divisional Headquarters for the cost of this food were disallowed, and the officers who eventually settled the bill gave it to be understood that, for the future, everybody must, like Tommy, make his own arrangements.

Since then there have been a number of emergency calls, and they have all been well responded to, but it seems likely that there may be some scepticism about them for the future. When the Specials were called out at one o'clock in the morning, and many of them on their way to the police station met anti-aircraft men who had been dismissed and told to go home because the raid was over, there was some annoyance, and when it appeared next day that the raid had been no nearer London than the north-east coast, the language that was used had never passed the Censor.

When the crime of the *Lusitania* started the anti-German riots, it seemed as if at last the more bellicose were to have their opportunity, but in most places they were bitterly disappointed. They came upon the sackers of shops certainly, but most of them looked quite respectable members of society, well-dressed and serenely impervious to all protest and warning. They did not deign to make any answer, and went on methodically throwing things out into the street as if it were a sort of sacramental function. There were others whose dress suggested that they were actually there on fatigue duty. They treated the remonstrances of armletted sergeants with good-humoured contempt, and suggested that the most obvious duty was to prevent members of the onlooking crowd from

picking one another's pockets, or the more excited of them from setting fire to the wrong houses. It was very galling, but all the strength was on the side of those who were "giving a lesson to the Government." It was only in the East end that there was any appearance of organised plundering, and it was only there that there was anything approaching violence. Several policemen were injured, and not a few of the mob were arrested.

This was a mere commonplace detail in the work of the regular force, but as it happened there was an unfortunate incident which has caused a good deal of heart-burning. A contingent of Special Constables from a part of London which thinks a good deal of itself was despatched to assist the regulars in keeping the peace and maintaining order. They arrived full of enthusiasm, many of them in the private cars of the more well-to-do members of the subdivision. Probably they were too enthusiastic, for they very soon got inextricably mixed up with the mob. This was the cause of the tragedy, for the regular police did not see their armlets, and bullocked them back with no more ceremony than if they had been football umpires somewhere in the League country at the mercy of disappointed punters. Many of them had not been so hustled since, years ago, they had played against a Hospital team, or some fifteen noted for its "resolute tackling." They were affronted; they were infuriated; some of them were bruised; and they have been boiling with rage over the memory of it ever since. They have announced that they will not go out again unless they are put into uniform.

It certainly was most unfortunate that gentlemen whose figures show that they do the greater part of their business in the city at lunch time; who have given up a great deal of week-end golf in order to go on duty where nothing ever happened to show that they were of the slightest use; who have been playfully asked by lady friends all through the winter months how many captures they had made; who have been blandly patronised by youths back from the front, suffering from varicose veins or feet affected by the cold, and frankly not anxious to go back again; who thought they at last had a chance of distinction, or at least of something to talk about,—it was more than unfortunate, it was galling, that they should have been moved on as if they were mere perverse, obstructive brawlers in league with the criminal classes.

Since the force was formed there have been many who have maintained that the Special Constables lose half their effective value by simply going about in their ordinary civilian dress. The average labouring man violently resents good advice given to him by a person whose one visible authority for the interference is an inconspicuous blue-and-white armlet, and he expresses his resentment in language which

is personal to a degree that patriotic citizens are not accustomed to, and endure only with difficulty. It may remind company directors of the attitude of suspicious shareholders, but there is not the expedient open of ruling them out of order. There are also quite respectable people who are so worldly wise that they will not admit that a man is not a German spy, or a jackal for scientific burglars, until they have seen his warrant card. Special Constables who are not on the telephone have to be called up on emergencies by despatch riders, and it frequently happens that suspicious members of the household look upon a messenger in plain tweeds as a probable product of ultra-civilised iniquity. The Special, red-hot with zeal, with another dozen men to call up and a conviction that he may be losing some "fun," is not apt to choose his words with the fastidiousness of a Chesterfield, even if it be only the butler whom he is summoning, and it is the master of the house who objects to the energy with which both the bell and the knocker are used, a sort of combination of curtain fire and machine-gun lead pumping.

Much the same sort of trouble occurred when the regular police handed over the duty of seeing that registered aliens were at their homes between the hours of nine in the evening and five in the morning. It was not a duty that commended itself to sensitive men, but in every division there were those who were not in the least sensitive, and set about it in a down-with-all-Salibosches fashion. By preference, they went either on the stroke of nine, and were adamant about taking any one who was five minutes late to the station to explain the disobedience of regulations; or they went about midnight and raised up the whole establishment. Their experiences did not always tend to soothe the truculent spirit in which they went out. Technically, it was only the males that they had to deal with, but there was always a protective feminine screen. In one house they would be sent to the kitchen, where onions seemed to be fried without cessation; in another, to a drawing-room which showed how much the alien had prospered and what execrable taste most German prosperity has. The cooks and maids were either tearful or forward. The ladies in the drawing-room were saucy or arch, or lofty and contemptuous, or cringing and pathetic. The result was usually disastrous to the alien males. They were often not over-prompt in making their appearance, and were talked to in God Almighty to a black-beetle fashion, or at best were solemnly warned that it must not occur again. Many of the Specials were acquainted with German, and refused to talk anything else, though the victims as steadily replied in English. It was the regular police who had originally marked the aliens down, and their form of registration very

often went no farther than giving them a piece of yellow paper with a number on it. They were probably pressed for time, or they may have been infected by the incurable sloppiness of Mr M'Kenna. Orders to get proper papers the following morning were the immediate result. Many of the men protested that they were not Germans at all, but Czechs, or Swiss, or Alsatians. They were required to produce their birth certificates, and naturally could not do so. There was a tremendous lot of zeal and, in most subdivisions, exceedingly little result. The crawlingly obsequious had the worst time of all, but there were many Germans who protested with tears that they had been forty years in the country, had no relations left in Germany, and would infallibly be shot as spies or defaulters if they were deported. A few were injudicious enough to offer to paste up recruiting posters outside their houses, which irritated some men into vaingloriousness. There was a great deal of variety in the work, and it was in violent contrast to pacing backwards and forwards on a bridge for four hours in the middle of the night, but probably there were few Special Constables who were not glad when it was over, and the aliens were interned or deported.

The question of providing uniform for Special Constables has been raised in the House of Commons, and has been objected to on the ground of expense. There was some talk of a Special Constable's cap, but this is rather a "run away and play" fashion of dealing with the matter; besides that, an official cap with plain clothes would be a direct challenge to the jester. No more has been heard of it, and there are not many Specials who have not a vivid recollection of the delays there were in supplying the most obvious equipment in August 1914. Relieving constables had to take over truncheons, whistles, and sometimes even the armlets from the men they relieved. The first possessors had signed a receipt for these articles, and were told that they were responsible, and they did not like passing them on. There were also, in particular, a great many who objected to taking over a whistle from a man about whose medical history they knew nothing. It seems fairly well established that no Special Constable has ever used his whistle yet, but that could not be anticipated in the days of early enthusiasm. The pessimists are quite convinced that Special Constable caps, if they are sanctioned, will be distributed with even greater solemn deliberation.

Special Constables get no pay. There are hardly any, in fact, who have not been out of pocket, either in actual expenditure of money, or through the wear and tear of clothes and boots during the wet winter and spring. Not even the subdivisional staffs are allowed to send letters O.H.M.S., and most sergeants have spent not inconsiderable sums on

writing to their squads. Station sergeants, after long weeks, were authorised to send in claims for postages, but these are scrutinised with a care that suggests the examination of a misdemeanant in the police court. The original grant of two shillings for stationery for the duration of the war has been supplemented, but in most places no one has troubled to ask where the office furniture came from or who paid for it. From the very beginning most stations have been very careful to enrol none but those over military age, or those who have been medically certified as unfit for active service. It is very desirable that the Specials should learn elementary drill, so that they may present a reasonably creditable appearance when they march out, but that is no reason why they should be put through regular physical drill by former non-commissioned officers.

The spectacle of a number of gentlemen of sixty or more, or of patriots who measure more round the waist than anywhere else, vertically or otherwise, going through Swedish drill exercises, is apt to raise comment among onlookers, whose sense of the humorous is perhaps not even acute, and at any rate is not balanced by any command over their tongues. It is just possible that the exercise is as excellent actually, as it is theoretically, but it is absolutely certain that the criticism is physiologically bad when the resentment aroused by remarks interferes with the action of the gastric juices, already disorganised by resentment against German depravity, Ministerial shortcomings, the School-board qualifications of the Censorate, and an epicene Press Bureau.

It is, in fact, almost as exasperating as an official printed letter of thanks which begins: "Deeply impressed by the public spirit, patience, and perseverance," &c., &c. That suggests a public letter-writer in a Madrid alley, or in a Punjab village, and it was simply insulting from a Minister whose conduct of his own office most of the Specials used regularly to denounce in their clubs or public-houses,—for there are taxi-cab driver Specials who sacrifice both money and sleep; there are greengrocer Specials who go straight from their beat to Covent Garden at five in the morning; there are gardeners and compositors, as well as the Club men of the Headquarters Division and the men who have taken up thousands of the War Loan.

DESERT AND MARSH IN ARABISTAN.

"Behold, an he-goat came from the West over the face of the whole earth, and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. And he came to the ram which I saw standing before the river, and he was moved with choler against him, and he smote the ram and cast him upon the ground and trampled upon him."

—*The Vision of the Prophet Daniel as he stood by the river Ulai* (the modern Karûn).

If the dear old lady who took such comfort from the sound of "that blessed word Mesopotamia" were alive to-day and had a grandson taking part in the Persian Gulf Operations, I fear his letters home would sadly disillusion her. The fact is that, although the Garden of Eden lies, according to the best traditions, right in the middle of the scene of fighting, and although the natives call their bit of the world the "Arabs' Paradise," an ordinary Englishman condemned to swelter in its awful heat is more likely to compare his surroundings to—the other place.

But discomfort and interest have a way of being closely linked in "strange parts," as the old lady would have called them: and though her ignorance is not shared in its blissful entirety by any large number of people nowadays, this far-away theatre of war is still so little known that perhaps the impressions of a traveller in the land may not be altogether amiss.

I must start by explaining that I am using the name of Mesopotamia in its usual—though hardly correct—sense of the whole Tigris plain, as far southward as the shores of the Persian Gulf and as far eastward as the great mountain-barrier of Persia.

Its main features can be summed up in three words: river, desert, and marsh. The river is, of course, the essential part. Those "Waters of Babylon" which once made Mesopotamia a rival with Egypt for the proud title of the Granary of the World, still keep their fertilising powers intact. But the old dams, canals, and barrages are all gone, and the productive land is now narrowed down to strips of palm-grove bordering the river banks. A bountiful provision of Nature—which seems to show poor powers of discrimination on the Dame's part—allows the lazy river-Arab to raise his date-crop with barely a hand's-turn of work. The flood of the tide at the head of the Persian Gulf so banks up the Tigris for nearly a hundred miles from its mouth, that by merely cutting irrigation-channels he gets his palms automatically watered twice a day. The familiar old creaking water-wheel of India and Egypt is thus altogether dispensed with.

Where the palm-groves end, the desert abruptly begins. Here you may not find that

> "Strip of herbage strown
> That just divides the desert from the sown,"

where old Khayyám invites us to wander in happy oblivion. The desert itself, — of which more anon,—is not of the good honest sand that one usually associates with the name. In the south, at least, where it was once part of the Tigris' delta, it is rich alluvial soil, good enough going for man and beast when dry, but a mere quagmire of the stickiest mud after rain or flood. I shall come to the marshes later.

To try to deal with the scene of the whole war in Mesopotamia would be beyond the scope of the present sketch. We will limit ourselves, therefore, to the part along the rivers Karûn and Kerkha, in the land of Elam of the Old Testament. Here it was that Daniel, standing by the Karûn's banks "in the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar," saw that prophetic vision of the conquering ram from the West with a "notable horn between his eyes" (can we help recognising our old friend, the British Unicorn?), and not far from here his tomb still stands, an object of reverence to the local Moslem, and of sometimes rather sceptical curiosity to the Christian traveller.

Another reason for the choice is that this region formed the background of a miniature campaign by our troops against the Turks and Arabs, which was more or less separate from the main expedition on the Tigris.

It would be best, perhaps, to give first of all a general idea of the lie of the country and a *résumé* of the fighting.

The Tigris and Euphrates combine at Gorna (the site of the Garden of Eden) to form the Shatt-el-Arab, which empties itself after a little more than one hundred miles into the Persian Gulf. At Mohammerah, some forty miles above its outlet, however, it is joined on the left bank by the swift and turbid Karûn, which rises near Isfahan in the North and flows by tortuous ways through the Bakhtiari hill-country and the plains of Persian Arabistan. To the west of the Karûn, between the mountains which form the edge of the great Persian plateau and the river Tigris, all is desert and swamp. Into the latter runs a smaller river now called the Kerkha, in ancient times the Choaspes, a stream whose waters—though not especially tasteful to the European palate—had such a vogue in old days that the kings of Persia would drink nothing else, and were supplied with it daily, even on their remotest campaigns, in golden jars carried by relays across the whole width of the empire. At Ahwâz on the Karûn, 110 miles up-stream, are the petroleum wells of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, and an

iron pipe laid across the desert on the eastern side of the river carries the crude oil down to the great refining works at Abadan on the Shatt-el-Arab.

It was just above Fao, the Indo-European cable station, on the opposite, Turkish, bank that our Expeditionary Force first met the enemy last autumn. We had landed with amazing promptitude within a day or two of the declaration of war with Turkey, but the Turks were already well entrenched in the desert. It was the rainy season, and the desert was such a sea of clinging mud that our men had to attack *at the walk*. After a very brave advance, however, they drove the enemy out of their trenches, and they, in their turn, had to retire at the walk under heavy gun fire. A curious thing then happened, which illustrates the unexpected possibilities of desert warfare. Men in the tops of our warships lying in the Shatt were surprised to see that our guns, at a given moment, ceased to fire and the enemy retreated unmolested. What had happened was that, to the eyes of our gunners on the level, they had *disappeared into the mirage*. Having once got the Turks on the run, we advanced without much difficulty on Basra and captured it. The Turks made their next serious stand at Gorna. Here we met with an obstinate resistance, but finally outflanked the enemy in a combined military and naval action and drove them up the Euphrates and Tigris. On the Euphrates, their position near Nasriyeh has since been successfully attacked; on the Tigris, they retreated to Amara.

But a second, and more or less independent series of operations was going on during this time on and near the Karûn. The Turks had stirred up the Arabs of the eastern desert and, having collected a mixed force, were threatening Ahwâz and the oil-fields. To meet this threat, a British and Indian force was despatched up the Karûn, and on March 3 a very desperate fight took place near Ahwâz, when a reconnoitring force of our men were surrounded in the desert by nearly ten times their number. They cut their way through and, though losing heavily themselves, accounted for 700 of the enemy left dead on the field. After an unsuccessful assault a month later on Ahwâz, the Turks again assembled in force in the middle of May on the banks of the Kerkha, and our troops went out to the attack. Once more the vagaries of their native desert saved the Turks and Arabs: a violent sandstorm arose, which, added to a sudden spate on the Kerkha, checked our attack and gave the enemy time to make good his retreat. In the meantime, however, we had so far progressed on the Tigris that General Townshend was able to steam with a gunboat flotilla fifty miles up the river to Amara. The Turks were now

in the grip of the pincers. The Ahwâz column under General Gorringe chased them westwards across the Kerkha; their advanced guard, breaking through to Amara, could do nothing but surrender to General Townshend, while the main body was driven into the great marshes behind Amara and there dispersed.

In playing its *rôle* in these events, the Karûn was not making its first appearance in our military annals. In the little-sung Persian War of the Fifties, we replied to an attempt by the Persian Government to seize Herat by shipping an army up the Gulf to Mohammerah. They bombarded the town, attacked and put to abject flight the Persian army; after which the Seaforth Highlanders proceeded triumphantly up the Karûn and took Ahwâz. Gashes in the trunks of some of the older palms and bits of shells, still ploughed up from time to time round Mohammerah, keep alive the record of this almost forgotten campaign.

The Mohammerah of to-day is a port of some importance, where merchandise for Central Persia is disembarked from ocean-going vessels into small river craft. The town straggles along the water's edge, and its streets are dirty beyond words; but you avoid their horrors by using the river for your comings and goings, as much as a matter of course as you would the canals in Venice. The analogy is even carried a little further by the species of boat which carries you, and which shares the several characteristics of canoe, punt, and gondola. A canoe in shape, but flat-bottomed like a punt, its prow has something of the graceful curve of the gondola. In this hybrid craft you recline in cushioned ease, propelled against the tide by sturdy Arabs with long smooth strokes of punt-poles of flexible bamboo, or, if the tide be with you, by noiseless paddles. The town, as you slide past it in your *belem*, displays the meretricious charm so peculiar to Eastern cities, hiding away an ignoble jumble of mud dwellings behind a delightfully picturesque river-front. Blue-painted, balconied houses, tented coffee-shops, and occasional fragrant gardens stretch along the bank, broken here and there by narrow creeks running inland and spanned at intervals by bridges of mellow brick-work.

Opposite the Custom House, in mid-stream, lie the two solitary units of the Persian navy. They are converted merchantmen, armed with light guns and commanded by an ex-captain of the Belgian Mercantile Marine. They remain, it is true, permanently anchored in the river — one of them, at least, for the very good reason that she has no engines, these necessary adjuncts to locomotion having, if rumour speaks true, been sold secretly by a former captain, when particularly hard pressed by his creditors. But they are kept outwardly smart and in good repair, and serve their purpose

once a-year by firing a salute on the Shah's birthday.

It was in the early spring of last year that we left Mohammerah on our march northwards, keeping to a line parallel to the Karûn. For some distance a fringe of palms bordered either bank; beyond, to east and west, stretched illimitable desert. Its surface, softened but no longer flooded by the winter rains, made perfect going for the horses' feet, and wherever the soil was not too impregnated with salt, a growth of young grass covered the desert with a carpet as smooth and fine as the lawn of a cathedral close. Tiny aromatic plants, indistinguishable to the eye, filled the air with a pleasant acrid scent.

I have mentioned, in speaking of the fighting near Fao, of the incident of mirage blotting out the retreating Turkish troops. Strange as this may sound to people at home, to any one who has travelled in the country such a phenomenon is as common as the setting of the sun. When trekking in the desert you are hardly ever free from it, and the forms it takes are legion. Often we were suddenly aware of a lake spreading out its waters on the horizon, while a long arm stretched towards us to within a few hundred yards, its banks perfectly clear-cut and the water clear and limpid. Or our caravan, half a mile in the rear, which the moment before had been walking quite normally on the surface of the desert, would suddenly perform a bewildering feat of "levitation," and continue its progress in the air. Or again, a group of palms or a crowd of horsemen seen from far off, would, as one approached, resolve themselves into low desert scrub a few inches high or a flock of goats.

On the afternoon of the second day's march from Mohammerah, there comes into sight a solitary group of trees, a pretty sure sign in this denuded country of the sacredness of the spot on which they grow. There among them, truly enough, gleamed the white dome of a saint's tomb. On reaching the place we were puzzled to find the ground all around strewn with a number of shapeless forms covered with reed-matting. An English officer with us, who knew the country well, supplied the explanation. The buried *seyyid*, it seems, stretches an arm of protection, as it were, over all objects within a certain radius of his tomb, and such is the odour of his sanctity that not the hardiest thief dare touch a thing within the circle. The shapes lying round were ploughs, hoes, and any other bits of property belonging to the semi-nomadic country-folk, who, when the season's work in the fields is over, leave them here till they return in the following spring. The place has thus become a kind of "safe-deposit" for the entire neighbourhood.

But another, somewhat gruesome, class of goods is ware-

housed round the tomb — to wit, corpses. The warehousing of a corpse sounds a trifle indecent, but it is literally what takes place. Every true Shia cherishes in his heart the ultimate ideal of being buried within the shade of the holy shrine of Kerbela, where Hussein, Âli's son of tragic memory, lies buried. Many go to that spot to die; others are carried thither by pious relatives after death. Those who perform the posthumous journey, however, have a burdensome condition laid upon them by the Turkish sanitary authorities — they must have been dead three years! So it comes about that a temporary resting-place has to be found for them; and here, by Karûn's bank, beneath the secondary shadow of the poor old saint, the little colony of pilgrims in purgatory wait patiently beneath their humble huts of reeds.

The country I am attempting to describe was the scene of Layard's 'Early Adventures.' "Adventures" seems almost too mild a term for the amazing life he led among the cut-throat tribes of the Bakhtiari, Lurs, and Arabs; his wanderings in disguise were as daring as any of Sir Richard Burton's Arabian travels. It was between 1840 and 1842 that the future discoverer of Nineveh came to Arabistan. He was twenty-two years old, and tiring of work in a London solicitor's office, had decided to try his fortune at the bar in Ceylon. He conceived the astounding project of making his way thither overland. Passing through Constantinople, Syria, and Bagdad, Layard reached the Bakhtiari country at the moment when one of their principal chiefs was attacked by the Shah's army under a most bloodthirsty and unscrupulous eunuch, known as the Matamet. The chief was forced to leave his mountain fastness and flee for his life into the plains of Arabistan, to find refuge with his friend the Sheikh of Mohammerah. The Matamet and his army pursued, and Layard describes how the terrified Arabs broke down all the dykes and irrigation dams, so as to flood the country against the invaders, pulled to bits their huts of reeds (such as they still live in to-day), and made of the *débris* rafts on which they embarked with their families and what few goods they could take. Layard himself, alone and helpless — he had been stripped by brigands shortly before — managed to build a small raft for himself, and, joining the endless flotilla drifting down the river, at length reached comparative safety in the Sheikh's camp.

In those days the tamarisk, which grows in a thick tangle in many places along the Karûn's bank, was a favourite haunt of lions. The following is Layard's account of a quaint popular belief about the King of Beasts: "The lions are divided into Musulmans and Kafirs or infidels.

The first are tawny, the second dark-yellow with a black mane. If a man is attacked by a Musulman lion, he must take off his cap and very humbly supplicate the animal in the name of Âli to have pity on him. The proper formula is: 'O cat of Âli, I am a servant of Âli. Pass by my house (*i.e.*, spare me) by the hand of Âli!' The lion will then generously spare the suppliant and depart. Such consideration must not, however, be expected from a Kafir lion."

The natives are nowadays spared the necessity of such a momentous discrimination, as it is now ten years or more since the last lion was seen in this part of the world. Their quondam prey, the wild pig, live, in consequence, a safe and uneventful life on the river's bank. These, with the shy herds of gazelle which occasionally appear on the horizon, and the ubiquitous jackals, whose howling makes night hideous, are almost the only four-footed beasts to inhabit this arid land. Birds, on the contrary, are very numerous — snipe, duck, partridges, long-legged cranes, and, above all, sand-grouse.

The time of our journey through the desert was the sand-grouse flocking season, and one could ride for hours watching their amazing manœuvres in the sky. On the horizon would appear what looked for all the world like the thick cloud of smoke streaming from an express train. Suddenly the cloud condensed into a solid mass, and an instant later a point shot out of the mass into the sky like an exploding rocket, leaving a wedge-shaped train behind. The next minute a change in the direction of the flock's flight would make it vanish as if by magic, only to reappear farther along the horizon and commence its strange evolutions over again. How many scores of thousands of birds go to make up one such flock, and how they all find food, are questions which must puzzle the most learned ornithologist. They say the beat of wings is quite deafening when a flock of sand-grouse is still two miles away, but for this I cannot vouch.

After a few days caravaning across this level desert, bounded by a skyline unbroken, as a rule, by so much as a single tree, the dead flatness of the landscape began to weigh on the soul; but gradually, as we journeyed steadily northwards, an indistinct whiteness on the horizon slowly resolved itself into the great, snow-clad Bakhtiari range.

Behind that dazzling barrier, with its 12,000-feet peaks, lay, we knew, the great tableland, which is the real Persia. For Arabistan, the country I have been speaking of, is but an outlying province of the empire—a limb stretched out, as it were, beyond nature's boundary, and peopled by a race which is Persian neither by blood nor speech.

The ethnical boundary here

between Turkey and Persia is of the dimmest, and the Arab tribes rove freely to and fro across the frontier. The tribesmen are always ready for a scrap, and it was from among them that the Turks drew a very large proportion of the forces we have been fighting. The particular tribe who threw in their lot most readily against us were the Beni Lam, who have their headquarters in Turkey, on the eastern bank of the Tigris near Amara. These sons of Ishmael are of a degenerate Arabian stock, which has lost all the finer qualities of the real Bedouin and retained all their least attractive characteristics. Pirates on the river and marauders on the land, they are fittingly described in the words of an Englishman who travelled among them seventy years ago: "The Beni Lam are not Arabs but Kafirs, who neither respect the laws of hospitality nor behave in any way as good Musulmans. They are as treacherous as they are savage and cruel, and would cut the throat of a guest for a trifle."

This amiable tribe, like several of its neighbours, lives almost exclusively by plunder. They rob and harry the more settled and respectable part of the population, who live, consequently, in a state of constant apprehension. The dread of them, in fact, spreads an utter blight over an enormous tract of country which, given a reasonable degree of security and a simple system of irrigation, might again become one of the richest regions of the world. Enterprise does not flourish, however, in a country where at any moment a raiding party of mounted men may swoop down on the flocks and herds of some peaceful village and drive them off. As the killing of a man in these parts gives rise automatically to a blood-feud, the raiders generally avoid actual murder, but their treatment of the poor little shepherd boys is inhuman. To give themselves more time to get away safely with their booty, they flog the little fellows within an inch of their lives, and leave them to crawl slowly home to their village: by the time they have reached it and given the alarm, the marauders are out of reach.

Before the war began these Arab tribes were one of the sharpest of the many sharp thorns in the Ottoman side, and the life of a Turkish Vali in their midst was not a happy one. But apparently the cry of "Death to the Infidel!" has still some of its ancient potency —or it may be that the lure of unlimited rifles and ammunition was irresistible; in any case, the bulk of the tribesmen decided to join forces with the hated ruling race in an adventure which they have had, happily, every cause to rue.

As may be supposed, permanent villages are scarce in a land where settled inhabitants are few and their fortunes so precarious. The few that exist are dotted at intervals along the Karûn's banks, and our

camps were pitched at nights near these groups of mud-and-reed huts on the edge of the swirling, ochre-coloured stream. Sometimes an antiquated stern-wheeler would pass up-stream on its way from Mohammerah to Ahwâz; watching her struggling against the current, we little thought that in less than ten months' time she would be toiling up again with a barrier of sand-bags round her bulwarks and a freight of British "Tommies" on board!

The villagers were friendly, if inquisitive folk, and we were often ceremoniously greeted by the members of an extremely aristocratic family of *seyyids* who lived scattered among the various villages, enjoying a position not at all unlike that of "county families" at home. Their language is rough, but eminently expressive. I remember the sheikh of a village, answering a question about a rather corpulent member of our party who had ridden through ahead of the rest, gravely informing us that "the father-of-bellies had passed."

The next village on our route was a good example of this favourite Arab device of forming names. It was called "The Mother-of-Date Syrup," a more appetising name than that of another of our camps, "The Mother-of-Pitch"!

From a point about seventy miles up the Karûn, we struck across, with our caravan, to the Kerkha, and crossed it at a place a few miles from where our troops bridged it during the great rout of the Turks.

All the rivers of Mesopotamia are fickle creatures, but the Kerkha is the most fickle of them all. The trick it played on our pursuing column, which has already been mentioned, was thoroughly characteristic. Rising near Kermanshah, the stream meanders in a series of inconsequent windings to within a few miles of the Karûn, turns thence abruptly northward again, and finally merges into the Tigris marshes and is lost. During the last part of its course it passes near a place called Howeiza, where some eighty years ago it gave a remarkable display of its perversity. The river at that date passed through the town and watered the fertile lands around. Excellent crops were raised, and Howeiza was a very flourishing town of 30,000 inhabitants. One fateful day, however, the good folk of the place woke to find themselves left high and dry—the river had, in the night, abandoned its old bed and taken to another some miles away. Deprived in this way of the sole cause of its prosperity, Howeiza rapidly declined. In a short time the population had dwindled to a tenth, and nowadays the place is little more than a village.

The river continues for many miles through the marshes before it is finally swallowed up, and a considerable population of fishermen and rice-growers lives along its banks. They are a queer amphibious race of

men, living in strange surroundings. The only means of locomotion in the marshes are roughly-built boats, a very primitive edition of the neat, graceful *belems* of the Tigris, daubed generously with pitch inside and out.

In one of these craft we journeyed leisurely down the river, paddled by native boatmen who droned interminable Arab love-songs as we drifted along. At times we met other *belems*, laden high with cut reeds, being tracked laboriously up-stream by a man on the bank, while his companion, sitting in the stern, steered the boat bow-on to the stream. These marsh-men wore very few clothes, and were burnt as black as negroes by the sun. The river banks were populated by innumerable tortoises, which sat craning their necks at us as we passed; solemn cranes stood sentinel here and there, and kingfishers, some of them blue, some black and white, flitted across the water. Once we saw at the water's edge a group of strange-looking birds of a sort the Arabs call *wâg*. They are grave, hunchbacked creatures, and stand in a half-human way, like penguins. But, instead of the penguin's cheerful air, they wore a sad, dejected look, and reminded one irresistibly of a party of Scotch Elders attending a funeral. The male of the species has a plumage of beautiful greeny-blue, but the females wear sober grey.

The marsh villages were unlike any I ever saw. The largest one, Bisaitîn, stretches for two miles or more along either bank, and our boat passed through an endless street of reed-huts, with side-streets at intervals leading off the main stream. The only material the people have for building their houses are the reeds which grow densely for miles round. To make a hut, the reeds are cut into lengths, tied into bundles, and planted in a double row in the ground. The space between is roofed by a "barrel-vault" of reed-mats, and the two ends closed by bundles of an extra large size, their tops uncut, so as to fall in graceful curves above the roof.

The whole life of the place goes on along the waterways. Staring Arabs and naked children line the narrow path between the huts and the water's edge on the very rare occasions when a European travels past, and other *belems* full of men with long fish-tridents paddle up alongside to gossip with your boatmen or exchange whiffs of the friendly hubble-bubble.

Where the main river ends comes a complete change of scene. To all appearance one has arrived at a *cul-de-sac* shut in by reeds on every side. We had reached this point, and were wondering how in the world to get farther, when half a dozen Arabs from the bank dashed into the water, and, shoving with a will, pushed our *belem*,

with ourselves inside, over a low mud dyke into open water beyond. A number of other *belems* were already there, and the jostling, shouting, laughing crowd brought the scene at Boulter's Lock vividly to one's mind.

We presently worked our way through, and began to paddle along a narrow channel winding among an impenetrable growth of reeds reaching high overhead. A feeling of complete isolation pervaded the place. The reeds cut off everything from sight save a narrow strip of sky and the short stretch of water between the last turn of the channel and the next; the surface was unruffled by the slightest breeze, the heat intolerable, and only the droning plaint of the boatmen, the soft dip of their paddles, and the occasional faint twittering of birds, heard but never seen, broke the silence.

A mile farther on, the channel widened out into a broad lagoon alive with waterfowl of different kinds, and on the yonder side the marsh blended once more with the familiar desert.

Among these marshes ended the pursuit of the Turkish army by the British and Indian troops, who had repulsed their attempts on Ahwâz and driven them in rout across the desert. And, as my object has been to sketch, however slightly, the scene of this campaign, here too must cease my tale.

G. E. H.

THE THIRTY-NINE STEPS.

BY H. DE V.

CHAPTER VIII.—THE COMING OF THE BLACK STONE.

I CAME down to breakfast next morning, after eight hours of blessed dreamless sleep, to find Sir Walter decoding a telegram in the midst of muffins and marmalade. His fresh rosiness of yesterday seemed a thought tarnished.

"I had a busy hour on the telephone after you went to bed," he said. "I got my Chief to speak to the First Lord and the Secretary for War, and they are bringing Royer over a day sooner. This wire clinches it. He will be in London at five. Odd that the code word for a *Sous-Chef d'Etat Major-General* should be 'Porker.'"

He directed me to the hot dishes and went on.

"Not that I think it will do much good. If your friends were clever enough to find out the first arrangement they are clever enough to discover the change. I would give my head to know where the leak is. We believed there were only five men in England who knew about Royer's visit, and you may be certain there were fewer in France, for they manage these thing better there."

While I ate he continued to talk, making me to my surprise a present of his full confidence.

"Can the dispositions not be changed?" I asked.

"They could," he said. "But we want to avoid that if possible. They are the result of immense thought, and no alteration would be as good. Besides, on one or two points change is simply impossible. Still, something could be done, I suppose, if it were absolutely necessary. But you see the difficulty, Hannay. Our enemies are not going to be such fools as to pick Royer's pocket or any childish game like that. They know that would mean a row and put us on our guard. Their aim is to get the details without any of us knowing, so that Royer will go back to Paris in the belief that the whole business is still deadly secret. If they can't do that they fail, for, once we suspect, they know that the whole thing must be altered."

"Then we must stick by the Frenchman's side till he is home again," I said. "If they thought they could get the information in Paris they would try there. It means that they have some deep scheme on foot in London which they reckon is going to win out."

"Royer dines with my Chief,

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and then comes to my house where four people will see him —Whittaker from the Admiralty, myself, Sir Arthur Drew, and General Winstanley. The First Lord is ill, and has gone to Sherringham. At my house he will get a certain document from Whittaker, and after that he will be motored to Portsmouth where a destroyer will take him to Havre. His journey is too important for the ordinary boat-train. He will never be left unattended for a moment till he is safe on French soil. The same with Whittaker till he meets Royer. That is the best we can do, and it's hard to see how there can be any miscarriage. But I don't mind admitting that I'm horribly nervous. This murder of Karolides will play the deuce in the chancelleries of Europe."

After breakfast he asked me if I could drive a car.

"Well, you'll be my chauffeur to-day and wear Hudson's rig. You're about his size. You have a hand in this business and we are taking no risks. There are desperate men against us, who will not respect the country retreat of an over-worked official."

When I first came to London I had bought a car and amused myself with running about the south of England, so I knew something of the geography. I took Sir Walter to town by the Bath Road and made good going. It was a soft breathless June morning, with a promise of sultriness later, but it was delicious enough swinging through the little towns with their freshly watered streets, and past the summer gardens of the Thames valley. I landed Sir Walter at his house in Queen Anne's Gate punctually by half-past eleven. The butler was coming up by train with the luggage.

The first thing he did was to take me round to Scotland Yard. There we saw a prim gentleman, with a clean-shaven, lawyer's face.

"I've brought you the Portland Place murderer," was Sir Walter's introduction.

The reply was a wry smile. "It would have been a welcome present, Bullivant. This, I presume, is Mr Richard Hannay, who for some days greatly interested my department."

"Mr Hannay will interest it again. He has much to tell you, but not to-day. For certain grave reasons his tale must wait for twenty-four hours. Then, I can promise you, you will be entertained and possibly edified. I want you to assure Mr Hannay that he will suffer no further inconvenience."

This assurance was promptly given. "You can take up your life where you left off," I was told. "Your flat, which probably you no longer wish to occupy, is waiting for you, and your man is still there. As you were never publicly accused, we considered that there was no need of a public exculpation. But on that, of course, you must please yourself."

"We may want your assist-

ance later on, MacGillivray," Sir Walter said as we left.

Then he turned me loose.

"Come and see me to-morrow, Hannay. I needn't tell you to keep deadly quiet. If I were you I would go to bed, for you must have considerable arrears of sleep to overtake. You had better lie low, for if one of your Black Stone friends saw you there might be trouble."

I felt curiously at a loose end. At first it was very pleasant to be a free man, able to go where I wanted without fearing anything. I had only been a month under the ban of the law, and it was quite enough for me. I went to the Savoy and ordered very carefully a very good luncheon, and then smoked the best cigar the house could provide. But I was still feeling nervous. When I saw anybody look at me in the lounge, I grew shy, and wondered if they were thinking about the murder.

After that I took a taxi and drove miles away up into North London. I walked back through fields and lines of villas and terraces and then slums and mean streets, and it took me pretty nearly two hours. All the while my restlessness was growing worse. I felt that great things, tremendous things, were happening or about to happen, and I, who was the cog-wheel of the whole business, was out of it. Royer would be landing at Dover, Sir Walter would be making plans with the few people in England who were in the secret, and somewhere in the darkness the Black Stone would be working. I felt the sense of danger and impending calamity, and I had the curious feeling, too, that I alone could avert it, alone could grapple with it. But I was out of the game now. How could it be otherwise? It was not likely that Cabinet Ministers and Admiralty Lords and Generals would admit me to their councils.

I actually began to wish that I could run up against one of my three enemies. That would lead to developments. I felt that I wanted enormously to have a vulgar scrap with those gentry, where I could hit out and flatten something. I was rapidly getting into a very bad temper.

I didn't feel like going back to my flat. That had to be faced some time, but as I still had sufficient money I thought I would put it off till next morning, and go to a hotel for the night.

My irritation lasted through dinner, which I had at a restaurant in Jermyn Street. I was no longer hungry, and let several courses pass untasted. I drank the best part of a bottle of Burgundy, but it did nothing to cheer me. An abominable restlessness had taken possession of me. Here was I, a very ordinary fellow, with no particular brains, and yet I was convinced that somehow I was needed to help this business through—that without me it would all go to blazes. I told myself it was sheer silly

conceit, that four or five of the cleverest people living, with all the might of the British Empire at their back, had the job in hand. Yet I couldn't be convinced. It seemed as if a voice kept speaking in my ear, telling me to be up and doing, or I would never sleep again.

The upshot was that about half-past nine I made up my mind to go to Queen Anne's Gate. Very likely I would not be admitted, but it would ease my conscience to try.

I walked down Jermyn Street, and at the corner of Duke Street passed a group of young men. They were in evening dress, had been dining somewhere, and were going on to a music-hall. One of them was Mr Marmaduke Mark-Brown.

He saw me and stopped short.

"By God, the murderer!" he cried. "Here, you fellows, hold him! That's Hannay, the man who did the Portland Place murder!" He gripped me by the arm, and the others crowded round.

I wasn't looking for any trouble, but my ill-temper made me play the fool. A policeman came up, and I should have told him the truth, and, if he didn't believe it, demanded to be taken to Scotland Yard, or for that matter to the nearest police station. But a delay at that moment seemed to me unendurable, and the sight of Marmie's imbecile face was more than I could bear. I let out with my left, and had the satisfaction of seeing him measure his length in the gutter.

Then began an unholy row. They were all on me at once, and the policeman took me in the rear. I got in one or two good blows, for, I think, with fair play, I could have licked the lot of them, but the policeman pinned me behind, and one of them got his fingers on my throat.

Through a black cloud of rage I heard the officer of the law asking what was the matter, and Marmie, between his broken teeth, declaring that I was Hannay the murderer.

"Oh, damn it all," I cried, "make the fellow shut up. I advise you to leave me alone, constable. Scotland Yard knows all about me, and you'll get a proper wigging if you interfere with me."

"You've got to come along of me, young man," said the policeman. "I saw you strike that gentleman crool 'ard. You began it too, for he wasn't doing nothing. I seen you. Best go quietly or I'll have to fix you up."

Exasperation and an overwhelming sense that at no cost must I delay gave me the strength of a bull elephant. I fairly wrenched the constable off his feet, floored the man who was gripping my collar, and set off at my best pace down Duke Street. I heard a whistle being blown, and the rush of men behind me.

I have a very fair turn of speed, and that night I had wings. In a jiffey I was in Pall Mall and had turned down

towards St James's Park. I dodged the policeman at the Palace gates, dived through a press of carriages at the entrance to the Mall, and was making for the bridge before my pursuers had crossed the roadway. In the open ways of the Park I put on a spurt. Happily there were few people about and no one tried to stop me. I was staking all on getting to Queen Anne's Gate.

When I entered that quiet thoroughfare it seemed deserted. Sir Walter's house was in the narrow part, and outside it three or four motor-cars were drawn up. I slackened speed some yards off and walked briskly up to the door. If the butler refused me admission, or if he even delayed to open the door, I was done.

He didn't delay. I had scarcely rung before the door opened.

"I must see Sir Walter," I panted. "My business is desperately important."

That butler was a great man. Without moving a muscle he held the door open, and then shut it behind me. "Sir Walter is engaged, sir, and I have orders to admit no one. Perhaps you will wait."

The house was of the old-fashioned kind, with a wide hall and rooms on both sides of it. At the far end was an alcove with a telephone and a couple of chairs, and there the butler offered me a seat.

"See here," I whispered. "There's trouble about and I'm in it. But Sir Walter knows, and I'm working for him. If any one comes and asks if I am here, tell him a lie."

He nodded, and presently there was a noise of voices in the street, and a furious ringing at the bell. I never admired a man more than that butler. He opened the door, and with a face like a graven image waited to be questioned. Then he gave them it. He told them whose house it was, and what his orders were, and simply froze them off the doorstep. I could see it all from my alcove, and it was better than any play.

I hadn't waited long till there came another ring at the bell. The butler made no bones about admitting this new visitor.

While he was taking off his coat I saw who it was. You couldn't open a newspaper or a magazine without seeing that face—the grey beard cut like a spade, the firm fighting mouth, the blunt square nose, and the keen blue eyes. I recognised the First Sea Lord, the man, they say, that made the new British Navy.

He passed my alcove and was ushered into a room at the back of the hall. As the door opened I could hear the sound of low voices. It shut, and I was left alone again.

For twenty minutes I sat there, wondering what I was to do next. I was still perfectly convinced that I was wanted, but when or how I had no notion. I kept looking at my watch, and as the time crept on to half-past ten I

began to think that the conference must soon end. In a quarter of an hour Royer should be speeding along the road to Portsmouth. . . .

Then I heard a bell ring and the butler appeared. The door of the back room opened, and the First Sea Lord came out. He walked past me, and in passing he glanced in my direction, and for a second we looked each other in the face.

Only for a second, but it was enough to make my heart jump. I had never seen the great man before, and he had never seen me. But in that fraction of time something sprang into his eyes, and that something was recognition. You can't mistake it. It is a flicker, a spark of light, a minute shade of difference which means one thing and one thing only. It came involuntarily, for in a moment it died, and he passed on. In a maze of wild fancies I heard the street door close behind him.

I picked up the telephone book and looked up the number of his house. We were connected at once, and I heard a servant's voice.

"Is his Lordship at home?" I asked.

"His Lordship returned half an hour ago," said the voice, "and has gone to bed. He is not very well to-night. Will you leave a message, sir?"

I rung off and almost tumbled into a chair. My part in this business was not yet ended. It had been a close shave, but I had been in time.

Not a moment could be lost, so I marched boldly to the door of that back room and entered without knocking. Five surprised faces looked up from a round table. There was Sir Walter, and Drew the War Minister, whom I knew from his photographs. There was a slim elderly man, who was probably Whittaker, the Admiralty official, and there was General Winstanley, conspicuous from the long scar on his forehead. Lastly, there was a short stout man with an iron-grey moustache and bushy eyebrows, who had been arrested in the middle of a sentence.

Sir Walter's face showed surprise and annoyance.

"This is Mr Hannay, of whom I have spoken to you," he said apologetically to the company. "I'm afraid, Hannay, this visit is ill-timed."

I was getting back my coolness. "That remains to be seen, sir," I said; "but I think it may be in the nick of time. For God's sake, gentlemen, tell me who went out a minute ago?"

"Lord Alloa," Sir Walter said, reddening with anger.

"It was not," I cried; "it was his living image, but it was not Lord Alloa. It was some one who recognised me, some one I have seen in the last month. He had scarcely left the doorstep when I rang up Lord Alloa's house and was told he had come in half an hour before and had gone to bed."

"Who—who——" some one stammered.

"The Black Stone," I cried, and I sat down in the chair so recently vacated and looked round at five badly scared gentlemen.

CHAPTER IX.—THE THIRTY-NINE STEPS.

"Nonsense!" said the official from the Admiralty.

Sir Walter got up and left the room, while we looked blankly at the table. He came back in ten minutes with a long face. "I have spoken to Alloa," he said. "Had him out of bed—very grumpy. He went straight home after Mulross's dinner."

"But it's madness," broke in General Winstanley. "Do you mean to tell me that that man came here and sat beside me for the best part of half an hour and that I didn't detect the imposture? Alloa must be out of his mind."

"Don't you see the cleverness of it?" I said. "You were too interested in other things to have any eyes. You took Lord Alloa for granted. If it had been anybody else you might have looked more closely, but it was natural for him to be here, and that put you all to sleep."

Then the Frenchman spoke, very slowly and in good English.

"The young man is right. His psychology is good. Our enemies have not been foolish!"

He bent his wise brows on the assembly.

"I will tell you a tale," he said. "It happened to me many years ago in Senegal. I was quartered in a remote station, and to pass the time used to go fishing for big barbel in the river. A little Arab mare used to carry my luncheon-basket — one of the salted dun breed you got at Timbuctoo in the old days. Well, one morning I had good sport, and the mare was unaccountably restless. I could hear her whinnying and squealing and stamping her feet, and I kept soothing her with my voice while my mind was intent on fish. I could see her all the time, as I thought, out of a corner of my eye, tethered to a tree twenty yards away. . . . After a couple of hours I began to think of food. I collected my fish in a tarpaulin bag, and moved down the stream towards the mare, trolling my line. When I got up to her I flung the tarpaulin on her back. . . ."

He paused and looked round.

"It was the smell that gave me warning. I turned my head and found myself looking at a lion three feet off. . . . An old man-eater, that was the terror of the village. . . . What was left of the mare, a mass of blood and bones and hide, was behind him."

"What happened?" I asked. I was enough of a hunter to know a true yarn when I heard it.

"I stuffed my fishing-rod into his jaws, and I had a pistol. Also my servants came

presently with rifles. But he left his mark on me." He held up a hand which lacked three fingers.

"Consider," he said. "The mare had been dead more than an hour, and the brute had been patiently watching me ever since. I never saw the kill, for I was accustomed to the mare's fretting, and I never marked her absence, for my consciousness of her was only of something tawny, and the lion filled that part. If I could blunder thus, gentlemen, in a land where men's senses are keen, why should we busy preoccupied urban folk not err also?"

Sir Walter nodded. No one was ready to gainsay him.

"But I don't see," went on Winstanley. "Their object was to get these dispositions without our knowing it. Now it only required one of us to mention to Alloa our meeting to-night for the whole fraud to be exposed."

Sir Walter laughed dryly. "The selection of Alloa shows their acumen. Which of us was likely to speak to him about to-night? Or was he likely to open the subject?"

I remembered the First Sea Lord's reputation for taciturnity and shortness of temper.

"The one thing that puzzles me," said the General, "is what good his visit here would do that spy fellow? He could not carry away several pages of figures and strange names in his head."

"That is not difficult," the Frenchman replied. "A good spy is trained to have a photographic memory. Like your own Macaulay. You noticed he said nothing, but went through these papers again and again. I think we may assume that he has every detail stamped on his mind. When I was younger I could do the same trick."

"Well, I suppose there is nothing for it but to change the plans," said Sir Walter ruefully.

Whittaker was looking very glum. "Did you tell Lord Alloa what has happened?" he asked. "No? Well, I can't speak with absolute assurance, but I'm nearly certain we can't make any serious change unless we alter the geography of England."

"Another thing must be said," it was Royer who spoke. "I talked freely when that man was here. I told something of the military plans of my Government. I was permitted to say so much. But that information would be worth many millions to our enemies. No, my friends, I see no other way. The man who came here and his confederates must be taken, and taken at once."

"Good God," I cried, "and we have not a rag of a clue."

"Besides," said Whittaker, "there is the post. By this time the news will be on its way."

"No," said the Frenchman. "You do not understand the habits of the spy. He receives personally his reward, and he delivers personally his intelligence. We in France know something of the breed. There

is still a chance, *mes amis*. These men must cross the sea, and there are ships to be searched and ports to be watched. Believe me, the need is desperate for both France and Britain."

Royer's grave good sense seemed to pull us together. He was the man of action among fumblers. But I saw no hope in any face, and I felt none. Where among the fifty millions of these islands and within a dozen hours were we to lay hands on the three cleverest rogues in Europe?

Then suddenly I had an inspiration.

"Where is Scudder's book?" I cried to Sir Walter. "Quick, man, I remember something in it."

He unlocked the door of a bureau and gave it me.

I found the place. "*Thirty-nine steps*," I read, and again, "*Thirty-nine steps—I counted them—High Tide*, 10.17 P.M."

The Admiralty man was looking at me as if he thought I had gone mad.

"Don't you see it's a clue," I shouted. "Scudder knew where these fellows laired—he knew where they were going to leave the country, though he kept the name to himself. To-morrow was the day, and it was some place where high tide was at 10.17."

"They may have gone to-night," some one said.

"Not they. They have their own snug secret way, and they won't be hurried. I know Germans, and they are mad about working to a plan. Where the devil can I get a book of Tide Tables?"

Whittaker brightened up. "It's a chance," he said. "Let's go over to the Admiralty."

We got into two of the waiting motor-cars — all but Sir Walter, who went off to Scotland Yard — to "mobilise MacGillivray," so he said.

We marched through empty corridors and big bare chambers where the charwomen were busy, till we reached a little room lined with books and maps. A resident clerk was unearthed, who presently fetched from the library the Admiralty Tide Tables. I sat at the desk and the others stood round, for somehow or other I had got charge of this expedition.

It was no good. There were hundreds of entries, and as far as I could see 10.17 might cover fifty places. We had to find some way of narrowing the possibilities.

I took my head in my hands and thought. There must be some way of reading this riddle. What did Scudder mean by steps? I thought of dock steps, but if he had meant that I didn't think he would have mentioned the number. It must be some place where there were several staircases, and one marked out from the others by having thirty-nine steps.

Then I had a sudden thought, and hunted up all the steamer sailings. There was no boat which left for the Continent at 10.17 P.M.

Why was high tide im-

portant? If it was a harbour it must be some little place where the tide mattered, or else it was a heavy-draught boat. But there was no regular steamer sailing at that hour, and somehow I didn't think they would travel by a big boat from a regular harbour. So it must be some little harbour where the tide was important, or perhaps no harbour at all.

But if it was a little port I couldn't see what the steps signified. There were no sets of staircases on any harbour that I had ever seen. It must be some place which a particular staircase identified, and where the tide was full at 10.17. On the whole it seemed to me that the place must be a bit of open coast. But the staircases kept puzzling me.

Then I went back to wider considerations. Whereabouts would a man be likely to leave for Germany, a man in a hurry, who wanted a speedy and a secret passage? Not from any of the big harbours. And not from the Channel or the West Coast or Scotland, for, remember, he was starting from London. I measured the distance on the map, and tried to put myself in the enemy's shoes. I should try for Ostend or Antwerp or Rotterdam, and I should sail from somewhere on the east coast between Cromer and Dover.

All this was very loose guessing, and I don't pretend it was ingenious or scientific. I wasn't any kind of Sherlock Holmes. But I have always fancied I had a kind of instinct about questions like this. I don't know if I can explain myself, but I used to use my brains as far as they went, and after they came to a blank wall I guessed, and I usually found my guesses pretty right.

So I set out all my conclusions on a bit of Admiralty paper. They ran like this:—

FAIRLY CERTAIN.

(1) Place where there are several sets of stairs; one that matters distinguished by having thirty-nine steps.
(2) Full tide at 10.17 P.M. Leaving shore only possible at full tide.
(3) Steps not dock steps, and so place probably not harbour.
(4) No regular night steamer at 10.17. Means of transport must be tramp (unlikely), yacht, or fishing-boat.

There my reasoning stopped. I made another list, which I headed "Guessed," but I was just as sure of the one as the other.

GUESSED.

(1) Place not harbour but open coast.
(2) Boat small — trawler, yacht, or launch.
(3) Place somewhere on East Coast between Cromer and Dover.

It struck me as odd that I should be sitting at that desk with a Cabinet Minister, a Field-Marshal, two high Government officials, and a French General watching me, while

from the scribble of a dead man I was trying to drag a secret which meant life or death for us.

Sir Walter had joined us, and presently MacGillivray arrived. He had sent out instructions to watch the ports and railway stations for the three men whom I had described to Sir Walter. Not that he or anybody else thought that that would do much good.

"Here's the most I can make of it," I said. "We have got to find a place where there are several staircases down to the beach, one of which has thirty-nine steps. I think it's a piece of open coast with biggish cliffs, somewhere between the Wash and the Channel. Also it's a place where full tide is at 10.17 to-morrow night."

Then an idea struck me. "Is there no Inspector of Coast-guards or some fellow like that who knows the East Coast?"

Whittaker said there was, and that he lived in Clapham. He went off in a car to fetch him, and the rest of us sat about the little room and talked of anything that came into our heads. I lit a pipe and went over the whole thing again till my brain grew weary.

About one in the morning the coastguard man arrived. He was a fine old fellow, with the look of a naval officer, and was desperately respectful to the company. I left the War Minister to cross-examine him, for I felt he would think it cheek in me to begin.

"We want you to tell us the places you know on the East Coast where there are cliffs, and where several sets of steps run down to the beach."

He thought for a bit. "What kind of steps do you mean, sir? There are plenty of places with roads cut down through the cliffs, and most roads have a step or two in them. Or do you mean regular staircases—all steps, so to speak?"

Sir Arthur looked towards me. "We mean regular staircases," I said.

He reflected a minute or two. "I don't know that I can think of any. Wait a second. There's a place in Norfolk—Brattlesham—beside a golf course, where there are a couple of staircases to let the gentlemen get a lost ball."

"That's not it," I said.

"Then there are plenty of Marine Parades, if that's what you mean. Every seaside resort has them."

I shook my head.

"It's got to be more retired than that," I said.

"Well, gentlemen, I can't think of anywhere else. Of course, there's the Ruff——"

"What's that?" I asked.

"The big chalk headland in Kent, close to Bradgate. It's got a lot of villas on the top, and some of the houses have staircases down to a private beach. It's a very high-toned sort of place, and the residents there like to keep by themselves."

I tore open the Tide Tables and found Bradgate. High tide there was at 10.27 P.M. on the 15th of June.

"We're on the scent at last," I cried excitedly. "How can I find out what is the tide at the Ruff?"

"I can tell you that, sir," said the coastguard man. "I once was lent a house there in this very month, and I used to go out at night to the deep-sea fishing. The tide's ten minutes before Bradgate."

I closed the book and looked round at the company.

"If one of those staircases has thirty-nine steps we have solved the mystery, gentlemen," I said. "I want the loan of your car, Sir Walter, and a map of the roads. If Mr MacGillivray will spare me ten minutes, I think we can prepare something for to-morrow."

It was ridiculous in me to take charge of the business like this, but they didn't seem to mind, and after all I had been in the show from the start. Besides, I was used to rough jobs, and these eminent gentlemen were too clever not to see it. It was General Royer who gave me my commission. "I for one," he said, "am content to leave the matter in Mr Hannay's hands."

By half-past three I was tearing past the moonlit hedgerows of Kent, with MacGillivray's best man on the seat beside me.

CHAPTER X.—VARIOUS PARTIES CONVERGING ON THE SEA.

A pink and blue June morning found me at Bradgate looking from the Griffin Hotel over a smooth sea to the lightship on the Cock sands which seemed the size of a bell-buoy. A couple of miles farther south and much nearer the shore a small destroyer was anchored. Scaife, MacGillivray's man, who had been in the Navy, knew the boat, and told me her name and her commander's, so I sent off a wire to Sir Walter.

After breakfast Scaife got from a house-agent a key for the gates of the staircases on the Ruff. I walked with him along the sands, and sat down in a nook of the cliffs while he investigated the half-dozen of them. I didn't want to be seen, but the place at this hour was quite deserted, and all the time I was on that beach I saw nothing but the sea-gulls.

It took him more than an hour to do the job, and when I saw him coming towards me, conning a bit of paper, I can tell you my heart was in my mouth. Everything depended, you see, on my guess proving right.

He read aloud the number of steps in the different stairs. "Thirty-four, thirty-five, thirty-nine, forty-two, forty-seven," and "twenty-one" where the cliffs grew lower. I almost got up and shouted.

We hurried back to the town and sent a wire to MacGillivray. I wanted half a dozen men, and I directed them to divide themselves among different specified hotels. Then Scaife set out to prospect the house at the head of the thirty-nine steps.

He came back with news that both puzzled and reassured me. The house was called Trafalgar Lodge, and

belonged to an old gentleman called Appleton — a retired stockbroker, the house-agent said. Mr Appleton was there a good deal in the summer time, and was in residence now —had been for the better part of a week. Scaife could pick up very little information about him, except that he was a decent old fellow, who paid his bills regularly, and was always good for a fiver for a local charity. Then Scaife seems to have penetrated to the back-door of the house, pretending he was an agent for sewing machines. Only three servants were kept — a cook, a parlour-maid, and a housemaid—and they were just the sort that you would find in a respectable middle-class household. The cook was not the gossiping kind, and had pretty soon shut the door in his face, but Scaife said he was positive she knew nothing. Next door there was a new house building which would give good cover for observation, and the villa on the other side was to let, and its garden was rough and shrubby.

I borrowed Scaife's telescope, and before lunch went for a walk along the Ruff. I kept well behind the rows of villas, and found a good observation point on the edge of the golf course. There I had a view of the line of turf along the cliff top, with seats placed at intervals, and the little square plots, railed in and planted with bushes, whence the staircases descended to the beach. I saw Trafalgar Lodge very plainly, a red-brick villa with a verandah, a tennis lawn behind, and in front the ordinary seaside flower-garden full of marguerites and scraggy geraniums. There was a flag-staff from which an enormous Union Jack hung limply in the still air.

Presently I observed some one leave the house and saunter along the cliff. When I got my glasses on him I saw it was an old man, wearing white flannel trousers, a blue serge jacket, and a straw hat. He carried field-glasses and a newspaper, and sat down on one of the iron seats and began to read. Sometimes he would lay down the paper and turn his glasses on the sea. He looked for a long time at the destroyer. I watched him for half an hour, till he got up and went back to the house for his luncheon, when I returned to the hotel for mine.

I wasn't feeling very confident. This decent commonplace dwelling was not what I had expected. The man might be the bald archæologist of that horrible moorland farm, or he might not. He was exactly the kind of satisfied old bird you will find in every suburb and every holiday place. If you wanted a type of the perfectly harmless person you would probably pitch on that.

But after lunch, as I sat in the hotel porch, I perked up, for I saw the thing I had hoped for and had dreaded to miss. A yacht came up from the south and dropped anchor pretty well opposite the Ruff. She seemed about a hundred and fifty tons, and I saw she belonged to the Squadron from

the white ensign. So Scaife and I went down to the harbour and hired a boatman for an afternoon's fishing.

I spent a warm and peaceful afternoon. We caught between us about twenty pounds of cod and lythe, and out in that dancing blue sea I took a cheerier view of things. Above the white cliffs of the Ruff I saw the green and red of the villas, and especially the great flagstaff of Trafalgar Lodge. About four o'clock, when we had fished enough, I made the boatman row us round the yacht, which lay like a delicate white bird, ready at a moment to flee. Scaife said she must be a fast boat from her build, and that she was pretty heavily engined.

Her name was the *Ariadne*, as I discovered from the cap of one of the men who was polishing brasswork. I spoke to him and got an answer in the soft dialect of Essex. Another hand that came along passed me the time of day in an unmistakable English tongue. Our boatman had an argument with one of them about the weather, and for a few minutes we lay on our oars close to the starboard bow.

Then the men suddenly disregarded us and bent their heads to their work as an officer came along the deck. He was a pleasant, clean-looking young fellow, and he put a question to us about our fishing in very good English. But there could be no doubt about him. His close-cropped head and the cut of his collar and tie never came out of England.

That did something to reassure me, but as we rowed back to Bradgate my obstinate doubts would not be dismissed. The thing that worried me was the reflection that my enemies knew that I had got my knowledge from Scudder, and it was Scudder who had given me the clue to this place. If they knew that Scudder had this clue would they not be certain to change their plans? Too much depended on their success for them to take any risks. The whole question was how much they understood about Scudder's knowledge. I had talked confidently last night about Germans always sticking to a scheme, but if they had any suspicions that I was on their track they would be fools not to cover it. I wondered if the man last night had seen that I recognised him. Somehow I did not think he had, and to that I clung. But the whole business had never seemed so difficult as that afternoon when by all calculations I should have been rejoicing in assured success.

In the hotel I met the commander of the destroyer, to whom Scaife introduced me, and with whom I had a few words. Then I thought I would put in an hour or two watching Trafalgar Lodge.

I found a place farther up the hill, in the garden of an empty house. From there I had a full view of the court, on which two figures were having a game of tennis. One was the old man, whom I had already seen; the other was a younger fellow, wearing some club colours in the scarf round

his middle. They played with tremendous zest, like two city gents who wanted hard exercise to open their pores. You couldn't conceive a more innocent spectacle. They shouted and laughed and stopped for drinks, when a maid brought out two tankards on a salver. I rubbed my eyes and asked myself if I was not the most immortal fool on earth. Mystery and darkness had hung about the men who hunted me over the Scotch moor in aeroplane and motor-car, and notably about that infernal antiquarian. It was easy enough to connect those folk with the knife that pinned Scudder to the floor, and with fell designs on the world's peace. But here were two guileless citizens taking their innocuous exercise, and soon about to go indoors to a humdrum dinner, where they would talk of market prices and the last cricket scores and the gossip of their native Surbiton. I had been making a net to catch vultures and falcons, and, lo and behold! two plump thrushes had blundered into it.

Presently a third figure arrived, a young man on a bicycle, with a bag of golf-clubs slung on his back. He strolled round to the tennis lawn and was welcomed riotously by the players. Evidently they were chaffing him, and their chaff sounded horribly English. Then the plump man, mopping his brow with a silk handkerchief, announced that he must have a tub. I heard his very words—"I've got into a proper lather," he said. "This will bring down my weight and my handicap, Bob. I'll take you on to-morrow and give you a stroke a hole." You couldn't find anything much more English than that.

They all went into the house, and left me feeling a precious idiot. I had been barking up the wrong tree this time. These men might be acting; but if they were, where was their audience? They didn't know I was sitting thirty yards off in a rhododendron. It was simply impossible to believe that these three hearty fellows were anything but what they seemed — three ordinary, game-playing, suburban Englishmen, wearisome, if you like, but sordidly innocent.

And yet there were three of them; and one was old, and one was plump, and one was lean and dark; and their house chimed in with Scudder's notes; and half a mile off was lying a steam yacht with at least one German officer. I thought of Karolides lying dead and all Europe trembling on the edge of earthquake, and the men I had left behind me in London who were waiting anxiously for the events of the next hours. There was no doubt that hell was afoot somewhere. The Black Stone had won, and if it survived this June night would bank its winnings.

There seemed only one thing to do—go forward as if I had no doubts, and if I was going to make a fool of myself to do it handsomely. Never in my life have I faced a job with

greater disinclination. I would rather in my then mind have walked into a den of anarchists, each with his Browning handy, or faced a charging lion with a popgun, than enter that happy home of three cheerful Englishmen and tell them that their game was up. How they would laugh at me!

But suddenly I remembered a thing I once heard in Rhodesia from old Peter Pienaar. I have quoted Peter already in this narrative. He was the best scout I ever knew, and before he had turned respectable he had been pretty often on the windy side of the law, when he had been wanted badly by the authorities. Peter once discussed with me the question of disguises, and he had a theory which struck me at the time. He said, barring absolute certainties like finger-prints, mere physical traits were very little use for identification if the fugitive really knew his business. He laughed at things like dyed hair and false beards and such childish follies. The only thing that mattered was what Peter called "ammosphere."

If a man could get into perfectly different surroundings from those in which he had been first observed, and—this is the important part—really play up to these surroundings and behave as if he had never been out of them, he would puzzle the cleverest detectives on earth. And he used to tell a story of how he once borrowed a black coat and went to church and shared the same hymn-book with the man that was looking for him. If that man had seen him in decent company before, he would have recognised him; but he had only seen him snuffing the lights in a public-house with a revolver.

The recollection of Peter's talk gave me the first real comfort I had had that day. Peter had been a wise old bird, and these fellows I was after were about the pick of the aviary. What if they were playing Peter's game? A fool tries to look different: a clever man looks the same and *is* different.

Again, there was that other maxim of Peter's, which had helped me when I had been a roadman. "If you are playing a part, you will never keep it up unless you convince yourself that you are *it*." That would explain the game of tennis. Those chaps didn't need to act, they just turned a handle and passed into another life, which came as naturally to them as the first. It sounds a platitude, but Peter used to say that it was the big secret of all the famous criminals.

It was now getting on for eight o'clock, and I went back and saw Scaife to give him his instructions. I arranged with him how to place his men, and then I went for a walk, for I didn't feel up to any dinner. I went round the deserted golf-course, and then to a point on the cliffs farther north beyond the line of the villas. On the little trim newly-made roads I met people in flannels coming back from tennis and the beach, and a coastguard from the wireless station, and donkeys and pierrots padding

homewards. Out at sea in the blue dusk I saw lights appear on the *Ariadne* and on the destroyer away to the south, and beyond the Cock sands the bigger lights of steamers making for the Thames. The whole scene was so peaceful and ordinary that I got more dashed in spirits every second. It took all my resolution to stroll towards Trafalgar Lodge about half-past nine.

On the way I got a piece of solid comfort from the sight of a greyhound that was swinging along at a nurse-maid's heels. He reminded me of a dog I used to have in Rhodesia, and of the time when I took him hunting with me in the Pali hills. We were after rhebok, the dun kind, and I recollected how we had followed one beast, and both he and I had clean lost it. A greyhound works by sight, and my eyes are good enough, but that buck simply leaked out of the landscape. Afterwards I found out how it managed it. Against the grey rock of the kopjes it showed no more than a crow against a thundercloud. It didn't need to run away; all it had to do was to stand still and melt into the background.

Suddenly as these memories chased across my brain I thought of my present case and applied the moral. The Black Stone didn't need to bolt. They were quietly absorbed into the landscape. I was on the right track, and I jammed that down in my mind and vowed never to forget it. The last word was with Peter Pienaar.

Scaife's men would be posted now, but there was no sign of a soul. The house stood as open as a market-place for anybody to observe. A three-foot railing separated it from the cliff road; the windows on the ground-floor were all open, and shaded lights and the low sound of voices revealed where the occupants were finishing dinner. Everything was as public and above-board as a charity bazzar. Feeling the greatest fool on earth, I opened the gate and rang the bell.

A man of my sort, who has travelled about the world in rough places, gets on perfectly well with two classes, what you may call the upper and the lower. He understands them and they understand him. I was at home with herds and tramps and road-men, and I was sufficiently at my ease with people like Sir Walter and the men I had met the night before. I can't explain why, but it is a fact. But what fellows like me don't understand is the great comfortable, satisfied, middle-class world, the folk that live in villas and suburbs. He doesn't know how they look at things, he doesn't understand their conventions, and he is as shy of them as of a black mamba. When a trim parlour-maid opened the door, I could hardly find my voice.

I asked for Mr Appleton, and was ushered in. My plan had been to walk straight into the dining-room, and by a sudden appearance wake in the men that start of recogni-

tion which would confirm my theory. But when I found myself in that neat hall the place mastered me. There were the golf-clubs and tennis-rackets, the straw hats and caps, the rows of gloves, the sheaf of walking-sticks, which you will find in ten thousand British homes. A stack of neatly folded coats and waterproofs covered the top of an old oak chest; there was a grandfather clock ticking; and some polished brass warming-pans on the walls, and a barometer, and a print of Chiltern winning the St Leger. The place was as orthodox as an Anglican church. When the maid asked me for my name I gave it automatically, and was shown into the smoking-room, on the right side of the hall.

That room was even worse. I hadn't time to examine it, but I could see some framed group photographs above the mantelpiece, and I could have sworn they were English public school or college. I had only one glance, for I managed to pull myself together and go after the maid. But I was too late. She had already entered the dining-room and given my name to her master, and I had missed the chance of seeing how the three took it.

When I walked into the room the old man at the head of the table had risen and turned round to meet me. He was in evening dress—a short coat and black tie — as was the other, whom I called in my own mind the plump one. The third, the dark fellow, wore a blue serge suit and a soft white collar, and the colours of some club or school.

The old man's manner was perfect. "Mr Hannay?" he said hesitatingly. "Did you wish to see me? One moment, you fellows, and I'll rejoin you. We had better go to the smoking-room."

Though I hadn't an ounce of confidence in me, I forced myself to play the game. I pulled up a chair and sat down on it.

"I think we have met before," I said, "and I guess you know my business."

The light in the room was dim, but so far as I could see their faces, they played the part of mystification very well.

"Maybe, maybe," said the old man. "I haven't a very good memory, but I'm afraid you must tell me your errand, sir, for I really don't know it."

"Well, then," I said, and all the time I seemed to myself to be talking pure foolishness—"I have come to tell you that the game's up. I have here a warrant for the arrest of you three gentlemen."

"Arrest," said the old man, and he looked really shocked. "Arrest! Good God, what for?"

"For the murder of Franklin Scudder in London on the 23rd day of last month."

"I never heard the name before," said the old man in a dazed voice.

One of the others spoke up. "That was the Portland Place murder. I read about it. Good heavens, you must be

mad, sir! Where do you come from?"

"Scotland Yard," I said.

After that for a minute there was utter silence. The old man was staring at his plate and fumbling with a nut, the very model of innocent bewilderment.

Then the plump one spoke up. He stammered a little, like a man picking his words.

"Don't get flustered, uncle," he said. "It is all a ridiculous mistake; but these things happen sometimes, and we can easily set it right. It won't be hard to prove our innocence. I can show that I was out of the country on the 23rd of May, and Bob was in a nursing-home. You were in London, but you can explain what you were doing."

"Right, Percy! Of course that's easy enough. The 23rd! That was the day after Agatha's wedding. Let me see. What was I doing? I came up in the morning from Woking, and lunched at the Club with Charlie Symons. Then — oh yes, I dined with the Fishmongers. I remember, for the punch didn't agree with me, and I was seedy next morning. Hang it all, there's the cigar-box I brought back from the dinner." He pointed to an object on the table, and laughed nervously.

"I think, sir," said the young man, addressing me respectfully, "you will see you are mistaken. We want to assist the law like all Englishmen, and we don't want Scotland Yard to be making fools of themselves. That's so, uncle?"

"Certainly, Bob." The old fellow seemed to be recovering his voice. "Certainly, we'll do anything in our power to assist the authorities. But—but this is a bit too much. I can't get over it."

"How Nellie will chuckle," said the plump man. "She always said that you would die of boredom because nothing ever happened to you. And now you've got it thick and strong," and he began to laugh very pleasantly.

"By Jove, yes. Just think of it! What a story to tell at the club. Really, Mr Hannay, I suppose I should be angry, to show my innocence, but it's too funny! I almost forgive you the fright you gave me! You looked so glum, I thought I might have been walking in my sleep and killing people."

It couldn't be acting, it was too confoundedly genuine. My heart went into my boots, and my first impulse was to apologise and clear out. But I told myself I must see it through, even though I was to be the laughing-stock of Britain. The light from the dinner-table candlesticks was not very good, and to cover my confusion I got up, walked to the door and switched on the electric light. The sudden glare made them blink, and I stood scanning the three faces.

Well, I made nothing of it. One was old and bald, one was stout, one was dark and thin. There was nothing in their appearance to prevent them being the three who had hunted me in Scotland, but there was nothing to identify them. I simply can't explain why I who, as a roadman, had

looked into two pairs of eyes and as Ned Ainslie into another pair, why I, who have a good memory and reasonable powers of observation, could find no satisfaction. They seemed exactly what they professed to be, and I could not have sworn to one of them.

There in that pleasant dining-room, with etchings on the walls, and a picture of an old lady in a bib above the mantlepiece, I could see nothing to connect them with the moorland desperadoes. There was a silver cigarette-box beside me, and I saw that it had been won by Percival Appleton, Esq., of the St Bede's Club, in a golf tournament. I had to keep firm hold of Peter Pienaar to prevent myself bolting out of that house.

"Well," said the old man politely, "are you reassured by your scrutiny, sir?"

I couldn't find a word.

"I hope you'll find it consistent with your duty to drop this ridiculous business. I make no complaint, but you'll see how annoying it must be to respectable people."

I shook my head.

"O Lord," said the young man. "This is a bit too thick!"

"Do you propose to march us off to the police station?" asked the plump one. "That might be the best way out of it, but I suppose you won't be content with the local branch. I have the right to ask to see your warrant, but I don't wish to cast any aspersions upon you. You are only doing your duty. But you'll admit it's horribly awkward. What do you propose to do?"

There was nothing to do except to call in my men and have them arrested, or to confess my blunder and clear out. I felt mesmerised by the whole place, by the air of obvious innocence — not innocence merely, but frank honest bewilderment and concern in the three faces.

"O, Peter Pienaar," I groaned inwardly, and for a moment I was very near damning myself for a fool and asking their pardon.

"Meantime I vote we have a game of bridge," said the plump one. "It will give Mr Hannay time to think over things, and you know we have been wanting a fourth player. Do you play, sir?"

I accepted as if it had been an ordinary invitation at the club. The whole business had mesmerised me. We went into the smoking-room where a card-table was set out, and I was offered things to smoke and drink. I took my place at the table in a kind of dream. The window was open and the moon was flooding the cliffs and sea with a great tide of yellow light. There was moonshine, too, in my head. The three had recovered their composure, and were talking easily—just the kind of slangy talk you will hear in any golf club-house. I must have cut a rum figure, sitting there knitting my brows with my eyes wandering.

My partner was the young dark one. I play a fair hand at bridge, but I must have been rank bad that night. They saw that they had got

me puzzled, and that put them more than ever at their ease. I kept looking at their faces, but they conveyed nothing to me. It was not that they looked different; they *were* different. I clung desperately to the words of Peter Pienaar.

Then something awoke me.

The old man laid down his hand to light a cigar. He didn't pick it up at once, but sat back for a moment in his chair, with his fingers tapping on his knees.

It was the movement I remembered when I had stood before him in the moorland farm, with the pistols of his servants behind me.

A little thing, lasting only a second, and the odds were a thousand to one that I might have had my eyes on my cards at the time and missed it. But I didn't, and, in a flash, the air seemed to clear. Some shadow lifted from my brain, and I was looking at the three men with full and absolute recognition.

The clock on the mantelpiece struck ten o'clock.

The three faces seemed to change before my eyes and reveal their secrets. The young one was the murderer. Now I saw cruelty and ruthlessness, where before I had only seen good-humour. His knife, I made certain, had skewered Scudder to the floor. His kind had put the bullet in Karolides.

The plump man's features seemed to dislimn, and form again, as I looked at them. He hadn't a face, only a hundred masks that he could assume when he pleased. That chap must have been a superb actor. Perhaps he had been Lord Alloa of the night before; perhaps not; it didn't matter. I wondered if he was the fellow who had first tracked Scudder, and left his card on him. Scudder had said he lisped, and I could imagine how the adoption of a lisp might add terror.

But the old man was the pick of the lot. He was sheer brain, icy, cool, calculating, as ruthless as a steam hammer. Now that my eyes were opened I wondered where I had seen the benevolence. His jaw was like chilled steel, and his eyes had the inhuman luminosity of a bird's. I went on playing, and every second a greater hate welled up in my heart. It almost choked me, and I couldn't answer when my partner spoke. Only a little longer could I endure their company.

"Whew! Bob! Look at the time," said the old man. "You'd better think about catching your train. Bob's got to go to town to-night," he added, turning to me.

The voice rang now as false as hell.

I looked at the clock, and it was nearly half-past ten.

"I am afraid he must put off his journey," I said.

"Oh, damn," said the young man, "I thought you had dropped that rot. I've simply got to go. You can have my address, and I'll give any security you like."

"No," I said, "you must stay."

At that I think they must have realised that the game

was desperate. Their only chance had been to convince me that I was playing the fool, and that had failed. But the old man spoke again.

"I'll go bail for my nephew. That ought to content you, Mr Hannay." Was it fancy, or did I detect some halt in the smoothness of that voice.

There must have been, for as I glanced at him, his eyelids fell in that hawk-like hood which fear had stamped on my memory.

I blew my whistle.

In an instant the lights were out. A pair of strong arms gripped me round the waist, covering the pockets in which a man might be expected to carry a pistol.

"*Schnell, Franz,*" cried a voice, "*der Boot, der Boot!*" As it spoke I saw two of my fellows emerge on the moonlit lawn.

The young dark man leapt for the window, was through it, and over the low fence before a hand could touch him. I grappled the old chap, and the room seemed to fill with figures. I saw the plump one collared, but my eyes were all for the out-of-doors, where Franz sped on over the road towards the railed entrance to the beach stairs. One man followed him, but he had no chance. The gate of the stairs locked behind the fugitive, and I stood staring, with my hands on the old boy's throat, for such a time as a man might take to descend these steps to the sea.

Suddenly my prisoner broke from me and flung himself on the wall. There was a click as if a lever had been pulled. Then came a low rumbling far, far below the ground, and through the window I saw a cloud of chalky dust pouring out of the shaft of the stairway.

Some one switched on the light.

The old man was looking at me with blazing eyes.

"He is safe," he cried. "You cannot follow in time. He is gone. He has triumphed. *Der Schwarzestein ist in der Siegeskrone.*"

There was more in those eyes than any common triumph. They had been hooded like a bird of prey, and now they flamed with a hawk's pride. A white fanatic heat burned in them, and I realised for the first time the terrible thing I had been up against. This man was more than a spy; in his foul way he had been a patriot.

As the handcuffs clinked on his wrists I said my last word to him.

"I hope Franz will bear his triumph well. I ought to tell you that the *Ariadne* for the last hour has been in our hands."

Three weeks later, as all the world knows, we went to war. I joined the New Army the first week, and owing to my Matabele experience got a captain's commission straight off. But I had done my best service, I think, before I put on khaki.

THE END.

ADVENTURES OF A DESPATCH RIDER.

WINTER QUARTERS—(*continued*).

VI. BEHIND THE LINES.

I HAD intended to write down a full description of the country immediately behind our present line. The Skipper, for fear we should become stale, allowed us plenty of leave. We would make little expeditions to Béthune for the baths, spend an afternoon riding round Armentières, or run over to Poperinghe for a chop. We even arranged for a visit to the Belgian lines, but that excursion was forbidden by a new order. Right through the winter we had "unrivalled opportunities"—as the journalists would say—of becoming intimate with that strip of Flanders which extends from Ypres to Béthune. Whether I can or may describe it is a matter for care. A too affectionate description of the neighbourhood of Wulverghem, for instance, would be unwise. But I see no reason why I should not state as a fact that a most excellent dry Martini could be obtained in Ypres up to the evening of April 22.

Wretched Ypres has been badly overwritten. Before the war it was a pleasant city, little visited by travellers because it lay on a badly served branch line. The inhabitants tell me it was never much troubled with tourists. One burgher explained the situation to me with a comical mixture of sentiment and reason.

"You see, sir, that our Cathedral is shattered and the Cloth Hall a ruin. May those devils, the dirty Germans, roast in Hell! But after the war we shall be the richest city in Belgium. All England will flock to Ypres. Is it not a monstrous cemetery? Are there not woods and villages and farms at which the brave English have fought like lions to earn for themselves eternal fame, and for the city an added glory? The good God gives His compensations after great wars. There will be many to buy our lace and fill our restaurants."

Mr John Buchan and Mr Valentine Williams and others have "written up" Ypres. The exact state of the Cloth Hall at any given moment is the object of solicitude. The shattered Belgian homes have been described over and over again. The important things about Ypres have been left unsaid.

Near the station there was a man who really could mix cocktails. He was no blundering amateur, but an expert with the subtlest touch. And in the Rue de Lille a fashionable dressmaker turned her *atelier* into a tea-room. She used to provide coffee or

chocolate, or even tea, and the most delicious little cakes. Of an afternoon you would sit on comfortable chairs at a neat table covered with a fair cloth and talk to your hostess. A few hats daintily remained on stands, but, as she said, they were last year's hats, unworthy of our notice.

A pleasant afternoon could be spent on the old ramparts. We were there, as a matter of fact, to do a little building-up and clearing-away when the German itch for destruction proved too strong for their more gentlemanly feelings. We lay on the grass in the sun and smoked our pipes, looking across the placid moat to Zillebeke Vigver, Verbrunden Molen, and the slight curve of Hill 60. The landscape was full of interest. Here was shrapnel bursting over entirely empty fields. There was a sapper repairing a line. The Germans were shelling the town, and it was a matter of skill to decide when the lumbersome old shell was heard exactly where it would fall. Then we would walk back into the town for tea and look in at that particularly enterprising grocer's in the Square to see his latest novelties in tinned goods.

From Ypres the best road in Flanders runs by Vlamertinghe to Poperinghe. It is a good macadam road, made, doubtless by perfidious Albion's money, just before the war. Poperinghe has been an age-long rival of Ypres. Even to-day its inhabitants delight to tell you the old municipal scandals of the larger town, and the burghers of Ypres, if they see a citizen of Poperinghe in their streets, believe he has come to gloat over their misfortunes. Ypres is an Edinburgh and Poperinghe a Glasgow. Ypres was self-consciously "old world" and loved its buildings. Poperinghe is modern, and perpetrated a few years ago the most terrible of town halls. There are no cocktails in Poperinghe, but there is good whisky and most excellent beer. I shall never forget my feelings when one morning in a certain wine-merchant's cellar I saw several eighteen-gallon casks of Bass's Pale Ale. I left Poperinghe in a motor-ambulance, and the Germans shelled it next day, but my latest advices state that the ale is still intact.

Across the road from the wine-merchant's is a delectable tea-shop. There is a tea-shop at Bailleul, the "Allies' Tea-Rooms." It was started early in March. It is full of bad blue china and inordinately expensive. Of the tea-shop at Poperinghe I cannot speak too highly. There is a vast variety of the most delicious cakes. The proprietress is pleasant and her maids are obliging. It is also cheap. I have only one fault to find with it—the room is small. Infantry officers walk miles into Poperinghe for their tea and then find the room crowded with those young subalterns who supply us with our bully. They bring in bulldogs and stay a long time.

Dickebusch used to be a

favourite Sunday afternoon's ride for the Poperinghe wheelers. They would have tea at the restaurant on the north of Dickebusch Vyver, and afterwards go for a row in the little flat-bottomed boats, accompanied, no doubt, by some nice dark Flemish girls. The village, never very pleasant, is now the worse for wear. I remember it with no kindly feelings, because, having spent a night there with the French, I left them in the morning too early to obtain a satisfactory meal, and arrived at Headquarters too late for any breakfast.

Not far from Dickebusch is the Desolate Chateau. Before the war it was a handsome place, built by a rich coal-merchant from Lille. I visited it on a sunny morning. At the southern gate there was a little black and shapeless heap fluttering a rag in the wind. I saluted and passed on, sick at heart. The grounds were pitted with shell-holes: the cucumber-frames were shattered. Just behind the chateau was a wee village of dug-outs. Now they are slowly falling in. And the chateau itself? It had been so proud of its finery, its pseudo-Greek columns, and its rich furnishings. Battered and confused—there is not a room of it which is not open to the wind from the sea. The pictures lie prostrate on the floor before their ravisher. The curtains are torn and faded. The papers of its master are scattered over the carpet and on the rifled desk. In the bedroom of its mistress her linen has been thrown about wildly; yet her two silver brushes still lie on the dressing-table. Even the children's room had been pillaged, and the books, torn and defaced, lay in a rough heap.

All was still. At the foot of the garden there was a little village half hidden by trees. Not a sound came from it. Away on the ridge miserable Wytschaete stood hard against the sky, a mass of trembling ruins. Then two soldiers came, and finding a boat rowed noisily round the tiny lake, and the shells murmured harshly as they flew across to Ypres. Some ruins are dead stones, but the broken houses of Flanders are pitifully alive — like the wounded men who lie between the trenches and cannot be saved. . . .

Half a mile south from Dickebusch are cross-roads, and the sign-post tells you that the road to the left is the road to Wytschaete — but Wytschaete faces Kemmel and Messines faces Wulverghem. I was once walking over the hills above Witzenhausen, — the cherries by the roadside were wonderful that year, — and coming into a valley we asked a man how we might best strike a path into the next valley over the shoulder of the hill. He said he did not know, because he had never been over the hill. The people of the next valley were strangers to him. When first I came to a sign-post that told me how to get to a village I could not reach with my life, I thought of those hills above Witzen-

hausen. From Wulverghem to Messines is exactly two kilometres. It is ludicrous.

Again, one afternoon I was riding over the pass between Mont Noir and Mont Vidaigne. I looked to the east and saw in the distance the smoke of a train, just as from Harrow you might see the Scottish Express on the North-Western main line. For a moment I did not realise that the train was German, that the purpose of its journey was to kill me and my fellow-men. But it is too easy to sentimentalise, to labour the stark fact that war is a grotesque, irrational absurdity. . . .

Following the main road south from Dickebusch you cross the frontier and come to Bailleul, a town of which we were heartily sick before the winter was far gone. In peace it would be once seen and never remembered. It has no character, though I suppose the "Faucon" is as well known to Englishmen now as any hotel in Europe. There are better shops in Béthune and better cafés in Poperinghe. Of the "Allies Tea-Rooms" I have already written. Bailleul is famous for one thing alone—its baths. Just outside the town is a large and modern asylum that contains a good plunge-bath for the men and gorgeous hot baths for officers. There are none better behind the line. Tuesdays and Fridays were days of undiluted joy.

Armentières is sprawling and ugly and full of dirt—a correct and middle-class town that reminded me of Bristol. In front of it are those trenches, of which many tales wandered up and down the line. Here the Christmas truce is said to have been prolonged for three weeks or more. Here the men are supposed to prefer their comfortable trenches to their billets, though when they "come out" they are cheered by the Follies and the Fancies. On this section of the line is the notorious Plugstreet Wood, that show-place to which all distinguished but valuable visitors are taken. Other corps have sighed for the gentle delights of this section of the line.

South-west from Armentières the country is as level as it can be. It is indeed possible to ride from Ypres to Béthune without meeting any hill except the slight ascent from La Clytte. Steenwerck, Erquinghem, Croix du Bac, and, farther west, Merris and Vieux Berquin, have no virtue whatsoever. There is little country flatter and uglier than the country between Bailleul and Béthune.

One morning Huggie, Cecil, and I obtained leave to visit Béthune and the La Bassée district. It was in the middle of January, three months after we had left Beuvry. We tore into Bailleul and bumped along the first mile of the Armentières road. That mile is without any doubt the most excruciatingly painful *pavé* in the world. We crossed the railway and raced south. The roads were good and there was little traffic, but the sudden apparition of a motor-lorry round a sharp corner sent that other despatch rider into the

ditch. Estaires, as always, produced much grease. It began to rain, but we held on by La Girque and Lestrem, halting only once for the necessary café-cognac.

We were stopped for our passes at the bridge into Béthune by a private of the London Scottish. I rejoiced exceedingly, and finding Alec, took him off to a bath and then to the restaurant where I had breakfasted when first we came to Béthune. The meal was as good as it had been three months before, and the flapper as charming.[1] After lunch we had our hair cut. Then Cecil took us to the little blue-and-white café for tea. She did play the piano, but two subalterns of the less combatant type came in and put us to flight. A corporal is sometimes at such a disadvantage.

We rode along the canal bank to Beuvry Station, and found that our filthy old quarters had been cleaned up and turned into an Indian dressing-station. We went on past the cross-roads at Gorve, where an Indian battalion was waiting miserably under the dripping trees. The sun was just setting behind some grey clouds. The fields were flooded with ochreous water. Since last I had been along the road the country had been "searched" too thoroughly. One wall of 1910 farm remained. Chickens pecked feebly among the rest of it.

Coming into Festubert I felt that something was wrong. The village had been damnably shelled—that I had expected—and there was not a soul to be seen. I thought of the father and mother and daughter who, returning to their home while we were there in October, had wept because a fuse had gone through the door and the fireplace and all their glass had been broken. Their house was now a heap of nothing in particular. The mirror I had used lay broken on the top of about quarter of a wall. Still something was wrong, and Huggie, who had been smiling at my puzzled face, said gently in an off-hand way—

"Seen the church?"

That was it! The church had simply disappeared. In the old days riding up from Gorve the fine tower of the church rose above the houses at the end of the street. The tower had been shelled and had fallen crashing through the roof.

We met a sapper coming out of a cottage. He was rather amused at our sentimental journey, and warned us that the trenches were considerably nearer the village than they had been in our time. We determined to push on as it was now dusk, but my engine jibbed, and we worked

[1] I cannot remember the name of the restaurant. Go to the north-west corner of the Square and turn down a lane to your right. It is the fourth or fifth house on your right. In Béthune there is also, of course, the big hotel where generals lunch. If you find the company of generals a little trying go to the flapper's restaurant.

on it in the gloom among the dark and broken houses. The men in the trenches roused themselves to a sleepless night, and intermittent rifle shots rang out in the damp air.

We rode north to the Estaminet de l'Epinette, passing a road which forking to the right led to a German barricade. The estaminet still lived, but farther down the road the old house which had sheltered a field ambulance was a pile of rubbish. On we rode by La Caiture to Estaires, where we dined, and so to St Jans Cappel. . . .

Do you know what the Line means? When first we came to Landrecies the thought of the Frontier as something strong and stark had thrilled us again and again, but the Frontier was feeble and is nothing. A man of Poperinghe told me his brother was professor, his son was serving, his wife and children were "over there." He pointed to the German lines. Of his wife and children he has heard nothing for four months. Some of us are fighting to free "German" Flanders, the country where life is dark and bitter. Those behind our line, however confident they may be, live in fear, for if the line were to retire a little some of them would be cast into the bitter country. A day will come "when the whole line will advance," and the welcome we shall receive then from those who have come out of servitude! . . . There are men and women in France who live only for that day, just as there are those in this country who would welcome the day of death, so that they might see again those they love.

VII. OF PROFESSIONAL AND AMATEUR SOLDIERS.

You may have gathered from my former letters that no friction took place between the professional and amateur soldiers of the Signal Company. I have tried all through my letters to give you a very truthful idea of our life, and my account would not be complete without some description of the Signal Company and its domestic affairs.

Think for a moment of what happened at the beginning of August. More than a dozen 'Varsity men were thrown like Daniels into a den of mercenaries. We were awkwardly privileged persons—full corporals with a few days' service. Motor-cycling gave superlative opportunities of freedom. Our duties were "flashy," and brought us into familiar contact with officers of rank. We were highly paid, and thought to have much money of our own. In short, we who were soldiers of no standing possessed the privileges that a professional soldier could win only after many years' hard work.

Again, it did not help matters that our Corps was

a Corps of intelligent experts who looked down on the ordinary "Tommy," that our Company had deservedly the reputation of being one of the best Signal Companies in the Army—a reputation which has been enhanced and duly rewarded in the present war. These motor-cyclists were not only experimental interlopers. They might even "let down" the Company.

We expected jealousy and unpleasantness, which we hoped to overcome by hard work. We found a tactful kindness that was always smoothing the rough way, helping us amusedly, and giving us more than our due, and a thorough respect where respect was deserved. It was astonishing, but then we did not know the professional soldier. During the winter there was a trifle of friction over cooking, the work of the Signal Office, and the use and abuse of motor-cycles. It would have been a poor-spirited company if there had been none. But the friction was transitory, and left no acid feeling.

I should like to pay my compliments to a certain commanding officer, but six months' work under him has convinced me that he does not like compliments. Still, there remains that dinner at the end of the war, and then . . .!

The Sergeant-Major frightened us badly at first. He looked so much like a Sergeant-Major, and a Sergeant-Major is more to be feared than the C.O., or the General, or the A.P.M., or anybody else in this disciplinary world. He can make life Hell or Heaven or a judicious compromise. Our Sergeant-Major believed in the judicious compromise with a tendency towards Heaven. When any question arose between professional and amateur, he dealt with it impartially. At other times he was inclined to let us work out our own salvation. I have always had a mighty respect for the Sergeant-Major, but have never dared tell him so. Perhaps he will read this.

The "Quarter-Bloke"[1] was a jewel. He was suddenly called upon to keep us supplied with things of which he had never even heard the names. He rose to the occasion like a hero or Mr Selfridge's buyer. Never did he pass by an unconsidered trifle. One day a rumour went round that we might get side-cars. That was enough for the Quarter-Bloke. He picked up every large-sized tyre he thought might come in useful. The side-cars came. There was a rush for tyres. The Quarter-Bloke did not rush. He only smiled.

His great triumph was the affair of the leather jackets. A maternal Government thought to send us out leather jackets. After tea the Q.-B. bustled in with them. We rode out with them the next morning. The 2nd Corps had not yet

[1] Company Quartermaster-Sergeant, now a Sergeant-Major.

received theirs. We were the first motor-cyclists in our part of the world to appear in flaring chrome. The Q.-B. smiled again.

I always think the Quarter-Bloke is wasted. He ought to be put in charge of the Looting Department of a large invading army. Do not misunderstand me. The Q.-B. never "looted." He never stepped a hair's-breadth outside those regulations that hedge round the Quartermaster. He was just a man with a prophetic instinct, who, while others passed blindly by, picked up things because they might come in useful some day—and they always did. Finally, the Q.-B. was companionable. He could tell a good story, and make merry decorously, as befitted a Company Quartermaster-Sergeant.

Of the other sergeants I will make no individual mention. We took some for better, and some for worse, but they were all good men, who knew their job.

Then there was "Ginger," the cook. I dare not describe his personal appearance lest I should meet him again—and I want to—but it was remarkable. So was his language. One of us had a fair gift that way, and duels were frequent, but "Ginger" always had the last word. He would keep in reserve a monstrously crude sulphurous phrase with a sting of humour in its tail, and, when our fellow had concluded triumphantly with an exotic reference to Ginger's hereditary characteristics, Ginger would hesitate a moment, as if thinking, and then out with *it*. Obviously there was no more to be said.

I have ever so much more to tell about the Signal Company in detail and dialogue. Perhaps some day I shall have the courage to say it, but I shall be careful to hide about whom I am writing.

VIII. I BECOME A GENTLEMAN.

The "commission fever," which we had caught on the Aisne and, more strongly, at Beuvry, swept over us late in January. Moulders, who had lost his own company and joined on to us during the Retreat, had retired into the quietude of the A.S.C. Cecil was selected to go home and train the despatch riders of the New Armies.

There were points in being "an officer and a gentleman." Dirt and discomfort were all very well when there was plenty of work to do, and we all decided that every officer should have been in the ranks, but despatch-riding had lost its savour. We had become postmen. Thoughts of the days when we had dashed round picking-up brigades, had put battalions on the right road, and generally made ourselves conspicuous, if not useful, discontented us. So we talked it over.

Directing the operations of a

very large gun seemed a good job. There would not be much moving to do, because monster guns were notoriously immobile. Hours are regular; the food is good, and can generally be eaten in comparative safety. If the gun had a very long range it would be quite difficult to hit. Unfortunately gunnery is a very technical job, and requires some acquaintance with Algebra. So we gave up the idea.

We did not dote on the cavalry, for many reasons. First, when cavalry is not in action it does nothing but clean its stables and exercise its horses. Second, if ever we broke through the German lines the cavalry would probably go ahead of anybody else. Third, we could not ride very well, and the thought of falling off in front of our men when they were charging daunted us.

The sappers required brains, and we had too great an admiration for the infantry to attempt commanding them. Besides, they walked and lived in trenches.

Two of us struck upon a corps which combined the advantages of every branch of the service. We drew up a list of each other's qualifications to throw a sop to modesty, sent in our applications, and waited. At the same time we adopted a slight tone of hauteur towards those who were not potential officers.

One night after tea "Ginger" brought in the orders. I had become a gentleman, and, saying good-bye, I walked down into the village and reported myself to the officer commanding the Divisional Cyclists. I was no longer a despatch rider but a very junior subaltern.

I had worked with the others for nearly seven months—with Huggie, who liked to be frightened; with George the arch scrounger; with Spuggy, who could sing the rarest songs; with Sadders, who is as brave as any man alive; with N'Soon, the dashing, of the tender skin; with Fat Boy, who loves "sustaining" food and dislikes frost; with Grimers and Cecil, best of artificers; with Potters and Orr and Moulders and the Flapper.

I cannot pay them a more sufficient tribute than the tribute of the Commander-in-Chief:—

"Carrying despatches and messages at all hours of the day and night, in every kind of weather, and often traversing bad roads blocked with transport, they have been conspicuously successful in maintaining an extraordinary degree of efficiency in the service of communications. . . . No amount of difficulty or danger has ever checked the energy and ardour which has distinguished their corps throughout the operations."

(To be continued.)

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

RUSSIA IN 1812 — THE KAISER'S HOPE OF PEACE — ROBBING PETER TO PAY PAUL—THE GERMAN PROFESSORS—"NO WISH TO DOMINATE THE WORLD"—A POLICY OF AGGRESSION — WHAT A GERMAN VICTORY WOULD MEAN—THE BURDEN OF A LIE—LORD HALDANE AGAIN — SHIFTING THE RESPONSIBILITY — THE NEW DEMOCRACY.

In August 1812, when Napoleon was invading Russia, Bernadotte, then Crown Prince of Sweden, wrote as follows to the Emperor Alexander: "Your Majesty need not be alarmed; your reserves will make up for your losses, while the Emperor Napoleon, daily weakened by battle and disease, will find himself before long reduced to a number of troops vastly inferior to your Majesty's. It is possible that he may win the first, the second, even the third battle; the fourth will be undecided; and if your Majesty perseveres, there can be no doubt that you will gain the fifth." Even the burning of Moscow did not dismay either Bernadotte or Alexander I. "The Emperor Napoleon," said Bernadotte again, "has accomplished his end; he has stricken Europe with astonishment; he thinks by this occupation to frighten your Majesty and to force you to subscribe to the terms which he will dictate. But even if he were at the head of an army far stronger than his, I should see in the taking of Moscow nothing but a glory which may be overshadowed even on the morrow." Nor was Alexander I. baffled even for a moment by uncertainty. He took the measure alike of his opponent and of his own resources. He was perfectly conscious of the danger in which he lay and of the courage with which he met a disastrous situation. He refused to admit the plea of hazard advanced by Schwartzenberg and others. "If I had not rejected with firmness the proposals of Napoleon," said he in 1813, "that, too, when immense French armies were at the very heart of Russia and divided my empire into two parts, when my preparations were still very far from their complete development, and when, as is not yet generally known, seditious movements had broken out in several of my western provinces, where to-day would Russia have been and my honour?"

If policy be but remembered history, it is not without interest to recall these passages of the past. We are in 1915 recurring with marvellous exactitude to the situation of 1812. It is characteristic of the Kaiser's madness that, like many another megalomaniac, he believes himself Napoleon reincarnated. He hopes vainly that if he mimics the gesture and keeps

before himself the vast ambition of the great Emperor, he will attain to the sovereignty of the world. His armies are, he declares, established in the heart of Russia; the Czar, he is sure, is desirous only of signing a separate peace, which will make the Germans supreme in Russia and the East. With Napoleon's optimism he thinks that one thing only is necessary —to produce his terms, and the war, on one face at least, will be over. A futile piece of arrogance, which a brief consideration of the past should have put for ever from his mind. The country which withstood the assaults of Napoleon will repel with courage and firmness both the attacks and the proposals of William II., who has not the wit to hide from the world the ardent desire which he cherishes of a speedy peace.

All the world over, indeed, there are signs that Germany would like to see an end put to the war on her own terms. Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, tottering upon his official throne, has sent an amiable message to seven hundred American journals, and talks magniloquently of the freedom of the seas, a misleading phrase borrowed from Napoleon, by which, of course, he means the perpetual domination of the German fleet. In passing it might be said that the seven hundred American journals would have been better advised to mind their own business. They should remember that a nation "too proud to fight" must keep outside the range of all questions relating to peace and war. The Pope, with as little reason as the American journals, has confided his pacific aspirations not to Rome but to Berlin, a manœuvre which will prove less profitable to him than he hopes. More than this, there seems no doubt that Germany, through Denmark, has addressed Russia herself, and offered such terms as she believes a retreating and unbeaten enemy might accept.

It is characteristic of Germany that she can try her adversaries only by her own standard. In her eyes Russia, France, and Britain are as cynically indifferent to the claims of honour and loyalty as she is herself. She looks upon them merely as other Germanies, or States—that is, ruled despotically by "culture" and egoism. That they should hold stoutly to engagements, signed and sealed, appears to her ridiculous. She herself has no more regard for her Allies than for her opponents. In her view they are equally pieces of the world, destined to be dominated by German arms or German chicanery. If only Russia would consent to a separate peace, Germany is ready to give her Galicia, which is Austria's, and the Dardanelles, which at present belong to Turkey. An excellent trick, truly, which would cost Germany nothing; and since she would repudiate the bargain on the morrow, it is not calculated profoundly to injure either Turkey or Austria. But even if the offer were made in good faith, it is not such a

one as even Germany herself, contemptuous as she is of political decency, would consent to accept. The principle of robbing Peter to pay Paul is always dangerous, because in the end it depends upon Peter's fear or Peter's complaisance. And when Germany has salved Russia's wounds with stolen poultices, she asks what seems a very humble fee in exchange. She will be content with Egypt and a free hand to deal with Russia's allies! A simple plan, isn't it? And only one obstacle lies in the way of its success: Russia has pledged her word, and the gift of the largest empire in the world would not persuade her to an act of treachery.

To those for whom treaties are scraps of paper Russia's loyalty is of course inexplicable. That any one should be so simple as to find dishonour an awkward bedfellow is a hopeless puzzle to Germany, the mother of deceit. And Germany resembles all other clumsy purveyors of falsehood by assuming that the world is ready to hear in good faith whatever she chooses to say. The Professors, for instance, obedient hirelings of the State, have lately been busy in signing a new manifesto. Whenever these pedants let loose their pens, you may expect mischief. Ever since the war began they have done their best to darken the counsels of Europe. They have made "intellectual" a byword of shame. Poor devils! We suppose that they could not act otherwise, even if they would. They are paid by the State, and since their pupils escaped from the fetid atmosphere of their class-rooms into the larger air of the battlefield, they have nothing to do but to sign false statements and to contribute letters of prevarication to the reptile press. At the ordered hint of peace they are there to do their master's bidding. They prepared a manifesto of inordinate length, and based it, as we should expect, upon a lie, or rather upon two lies. In an ingenious preamble they declare that Germany had never thought of transgressing the narrow bounds of her possessions on the Continent. She had no proud ambitions; all she wanted was to live in peace with her neighbours; and it was not until her enemies formed plans for her annihilation that she took up arms. Thus the German Professors; and though we rate their intelligence very cheaply, we will not insult them by pretending that they do not know that they are telling a lie. They can, we believe, read and write. The hopes and wishes of the Pan-German party have been before their eyes for many years. The press has dinned into their ears the aspirations of the Crown Prince and his satellites, and they still affect to think that the war which devastates Europe to-day is not Germany's war. Doubtless they know how far their falsehoods will carry. They are right, maybe, in regarding the whole Teutonic Empire as one class-room packed with items

who dare not speak or think for themselves. But they should not attempt to make their bought voices heard beyond the borders of Germany. Not even the presence among the signatories of the notorious Professor Oncken, once the friend of an English Lord Chancellor, the hero to whom Lord Haldane confessed the secret of his "spiritual home," is likely to carry weight with any other Englishman than he who once sunned himself in the smile of the German Emperor.

And then, the Professors, having pictured their country the poor hopeless victim of an unprovoked assault, proceed to their other lie, which is, that if Germany now demands an increase of territory it is merely to guard herself against being ambushed a second time! And what is the increase of territory which the Professors suggest? Nothing less than the general plan which has been sketched a thousand times in the official pamphlets and newspapers of Pan-Germanism. There is not one proposal that has not been familiar to us for years. A rectified frontier from Belfort to the sea, part of the North French Channel coast, that the Germans may be "strategically safer as regards England and may secure better access to the ocean." These and many other old plans the Professors hurl at our heads, as fresh missiles prepared to suit a fresh situation. If they hope to deceive anybody, they should make a better show of sincerity than this. As it is, not a single human being outside their well-drilled class-rooms will esteem their pompous words and idle signatures at a feather's weight.

They confess, do these amiable Professors, that "they do not wish to dominate the world." No doubt the world will accept this assurance with due humility of spirit. Yet had they a gleam of humour between them they would never have been betrayed into so fatuous a confession. How, indeed, should they, who have not yet learned how to rule a province, hold the whole world beneath their sway? Alsace-Lorraine, Posen, Schleswig-Holstein, are eternal monuments of their impotence and their shame. They have but one view of peace in a conquered country, and that is a desert. They know but one method of government — suppression. Think what a place Europe would be with a thousand newly invented Zaberns! What would happen if the Germans did achieve the summit of their ambition—if they laid a permanent hand upon a great part of France and all Belgium, if they established themselves upon the coasts of Picardy and Normandy, if they turned England into a vassal? True, they would drive us all into an abject slavery; but what of themselves? To keep us under their heel they would be compelled to remain at war for ever; they would involve the world in bloodshed until the end of time. For even the un-

speakable Oncken and his friends should know, if they have studied the history which they profess to any purpose, that high-spirited nations cannot be kept in subjection by arms alone. Or is it that they aspire, these bloodthirsty knights of the class-room, to a spirited policy of wholesale extermination?

Diplomatists and Professors alike waste their breath. The Allies have but one mind, one purpose. Until Germany is beaten to her knees there shall be no peace. It is our duty to see to it that Europe remains a decent place to live in, a place where men may go freely and quietly about their business, and where honourable pledges may be given and received. In one year of war the Germans have revealed themselves in their true colours even to the careless onlooker. They are garrulous as well as vain, and it is our own fault if we do not know precisely what they would do with victory, if by any remissness of the Allies they were permitted to attain it.

Europe under Germany's auspices would become a shambles. The state of Belgium and of Northern France, conquered countries, are an eloquent expression of her ideal. Ruined homes and a starving people—these are the hopes of life she cherishes for others. She knows no other means of civilisation than to devastate. Rape and murder and theft are the pious handmaidens of her "culture." And while she delights to kill women and children by stealth in the night, as our East Coast bears indignant witness, she makes war upon the arts with peculiar brutality. The destruction of the Cathedral at Reims, far more effective than is generally supposed, was purposed and deliberate, as the unharmed buildings which surround it sufficiently prove. It is easier, in truth, to demolish a church than to kill the stubborn soul of a man. And rapt in admiration as the Germans are of fire, there is no burning that smells so sweet in their nostrils as the burning of books. To set libraries ablaze they are ready to make any sacrifice. For all books not inspired by Teutonic pedantry are hateful to them. They still glory in the shame of Louvain, and if they could make the peace of their own choosing, they would come forth as the masters of a Europe enslaved and in ashes.

We know, therefore, from the experience of others, the fate which awaits us if we do not insist upon imposing our own peace upon Germany. If we prefer a momentary ease to permanent liberty, if we are willing to be the slaves of the cruellest taskmasters who ever tried to put an iron heel upon us, then by all means let us cling to the "freedom" of voluntary service—it is the only "freedom" we shall ever enjoy, and we shall not enjoy it long; let us put the licence and caprice of our trade-unions above national security; let us show the same meanness of spirit which Frederick William of Prussia showed when Na-

poleon menaced him: we shall earn and deserve the same inglorious fate. We shall see our citizens, unwilling to fight for themselves, compelled to fight for a tyrant, and we shall sink into the same vain apathy which submerged Prussia rather more than a century ago. But the victory of Prussia, contemplated by her Professors, would inflict injuries on the world which would be felt far beyond the boundaries of her proclaimed foes. It would mean, in the first place, the complete extinction of international law, an end to that comity which has restrained all nations, save Prussia, from acts of unlicensed violence in times of war. The first thing which Prussia did, when she meditated and contrived the present conflict, was to tear to shreds the code which chivalrous peoples have always respected. There is not an article in that code that they have not stamped underfoot. They have laughed indecently at their own pledge of neutrality. They have scoffed at scraps of paper as burglars scoff at the restraints of the criminal law. And if they were permitted to make their own terms, or to emerge from the conflict without being crushed, war henceforth would become a piece of German barbarism and no more. Let us remember some of the blackest of their deeds, which, with a patched peace, might pass into precedents. Everywhere the Germans have flouted the rights of non-combatants: they have murdered harmless citizens not in arms against them, they have set women and children in the firing line, relying upon the humanity of their opponents, they have taken hostages and levied pitiless tolls upon starving cities, they have marked their passage through occupied territory with theft and robbery, and have left behind them everywhere a trail of filth and dishonour. Were a patched peace signed to-day, these evil deeds would not be punished, and Germany once more lifting up her head would decree, in her own dominions at least, forgetfulness of her shame. To all who reverence the tradition of our race, who recognise that war conducted on the principles of chivalry is an inevitable part of civilisation, any slurring over of our foes' brutality would seem a piece of abject cowardice; and the only reply that we can give to the rodomontade of Professor Oncken and his accomplices is to determine that the war shall be carried on until Germany be compelled to accept whatever terms are offered her.

Worse still, if Germany were permitted to make peace at her own time and even partially on her own terms, Europe would remain beaten down beneath the burden of a lie. She would be asked to believe by men still holding swords in their hands that in August 1914 Germany, who had been preparing to fight for forty years, was the victim of a foul conspiracy; that the war was not Germany's war, as all the world knows it was, but Eng-

land's; that Belgium neutrality was not violated by Germany; that Louvain was not ruthlessly destroyed; that the monstrous von Plattenberg did not throw shells upon the Cathedral of Reims; that the *Lusitania* sank because the contraband of war which filled its hold exploded; that Scarborough and Whitby are fortified towns; that Houston Chamberlain is not an obedient, overpaid flunkey, but a genuine historian; in brief, that black is white, that wolves are sheep, that William II. himself is a humble, virtuous Sir Galahad.

Now we can imagine no worse disaster than that Europe should be implicated in this net of foul falsehood, or that even a part of Europe should be encouraged to accept so base a standard of life. We know that if we do not come forth victorious, the masters of our own peace, the legend of German humanity would be recreated for us, as it was created in 1871. With so persuasive an eloquence does the victor speak! Forty years ago everybody knew that Germany had assaulted France with the brutal weapons of fire and sword, only too familiar in Belgium to-day. But the conquering Bismarck announced to a patient Europe that the Germans had shown everywhere the kindliness of chivalrous gentlemen. France, his victim, knew that he lied. Elsewhere his vain falsehoods were accepted humbly for the truth, and even Lord Bryce and his Committee have affected to see in Germany's devastation of Belgium a new development of the Teutonic character. Indeed it is as old as the house of Brandenburg itself, nor will it ever cease until the Hohenzollerns are humbled to the dust.

Herr Harden, the one living German who does not wrap up his thoughts in the greased paper of hypocrisy, a year ago struck the note of defiance. Before war was declared he put the plain facts before the world. "Why not admit," said he, "what is and must be the truth, that between Vienna and Berlin everything was jointly prepared? We should be mere slaves, unworthy of the men who achieved Prussian predominance in Germany, we should be like Duncan's sleeping grooms in Macbeth, if fifty years after Königgratz things could be otherwise." And while he is urgent that his country should shoulder the whole responsibility, he shows us what the German point of view would be if victory were assured. "Let us drop our miserable attempts," he wrote, "to excuse Germany's action. . . . Not against our will, and as a nation taken by surprise, did we hurl ourselves into this gigantic venture. We willed it; we had to will it. We do not stand before the judgment-seat of Europe; we acknowledge no such jurisdiction. Our might shall create a new law in Europe. It is Germany that strikes. When she has conquered new domains for her genius, then the priesthoods of

all the gods will praise the good war." Herr Harden speaks with an honesty which is far beyond the reach of the snivelling Professors. He refuses to abuse his enemies for that which his countrymen achieved of their own settled purpose, and in consequence of his candour he is in exile. But before he went he let the cat out of the bag. He confessed with truth that the German might would, if it could, create a new law in Europe, and it is to prevent this new and infamous law becoming supreme that the Allies will fight until their last bullet and their last man.

There is one thing for which we owe the German Professors a debt of gratitude. They are at last giving up the hypocrisy of "culture." It has been driven even into their obtuse heads that "culture" has not paid. Though they are devoid of humour themselves the passage of a year has made them pervious to ridicule. We all remember how at the outset they announced to the world that they were fighting to impose upon all and sundry the priceless gift of their "culture." So benignly unselfish were they, that rather than not witness the universality of "culture," they would drive it in at the sword's point, and slaughter all those foolish ones who refused to accept the boon. They don't think much of culture now; it has proved unpopular; and we are glad to think that after a whole year of hypocrisy our enemies have renounced the silliest of their lies. What they want now is not to extend the sphere of "culture," but to increase their territory; and though they will find one task hopeless, like the other, we shall at any rate be relieved from the annoyance of an irritating falsehood. "Our military aims and peace conditions," admit Professor Oncken and the rest, "have nothing to do with over-anxiety for the German spirit." It is not thus that they spoke a brief year ago. Then they indulged bravely in another kind of cant. And if you would seek the reason of their changed ambition, you may discover it among the documents found in America—documents which prove that Germany's ambassadors in neutral countries are paid to engage in hostile plots, and to stir up under the guise of friendship vile conspiracies in workshops and newspaper offices. A memorandum issued by the German Foreign Office to its hirelings in America contains this priceless paragraph: "The pride and imagination of Americans and the regard for their culture should not be continually offended by the assertion that German culture is the only real culture and surpasses everything else." There's cunning for you! And since in Germany spies and professors obey the same inexorable law, we need not doubt that Professor Oncken, like the paid emissary working on the German-American press, is merely doing what he is told. As for the Professors, they, poor civil servants out of a job,

might wisely be persuaded to defer cutting up the pelt until they have killed the bear. And as for the embroilment in America, we shall follow its development with the greatest curiosity. There must be some insults which a nation, "too proud to fight," will think it imperative to resent, and among them surely is a widespread plot devised in Berlin and carried out with the greatest energy and cunning by the German diplomatic staff in Washington. It would be impossible to match this effrontery of the German Government in the annals of the world. Its interpretation of an Ambassador's duties is proved to be such that it will not be easy in the future for a civilised state to receive a German Envoy. The habit of an honourable profession is nothing to the Germans; the comity of nations is nothing to them; if they can win by trickery and intrigue a single point in the battle of life, they are content —nay, eager—to break all the rules which obtain among gentlemen. How they have tampered with the press of the United States we know well. A journal published in Providence (R.I.) has completed the indictment by explaining at length "the German Embassy's wilful and persistent violation of the neutrality laws." It appears now to be certain, what previously was dimly assumed, that the Stiegler frauds may be traced directly to the activity of Captain Boy-Ed; that a list was drawn up of the German reservists who were to be sent back to their own country with forged passports, supplied by the military attaché at Washington; that this list was headed by the name of Captain Horn, who attempted to blow up the Vanceborough bridge on the Canadian border, and who confessed that he did what he did by the order of a German officer connected with the German Government in America. It is a long and grave indictment, and it is intensified by the conclusion of the 'Providence Journal': "This immense amount of evidence," thus it writes, "in the possession of the Government regarding these efforts, the attempts to bribe Labour leaders, to compel the Government to act in the fraudulent plot prepared against British war vessels outside New York Harbour, to create a conspiracy among banking institutions in the control of Germans or German Americans, to poison horses and mules at New Orleans, to involve the United States with Mexico, and to stir up strikes and sedition by forming alleged peace associations, have all combined to create conditions under which the United States Government can remain silent no longer." We wonder. The Government which has made no effective protest against the murder of its citizens who were drowned in the sinking of the *Lusitania*, has a mighty faculty of silence, which President Wilson is not likely to impair. It is for him to judge whether

he and his colleagues will ever again show themselves sensitive to insult, or will admit Germany's last enormity to be an "unfriendly" act. For ourselves we have little doubt that President Wilson's "pride" will prove equal to this or any other assault which may be made upon it. But there is no reason why we, who are not proud with this particular kind of pride, should blind ourselves to the tireless ingenuity of the Germans. When peace is made we should do well to remember that a German ambassador stands not upon the same foot as the ambassadors of civilised States. Meanwhile we might reflect that what German money can achieve in America, it can achieve, more subtly administered, in England also, and that our strikes, no less than the attempted strikes in the United States, owe something to foreign gold.

America's failure to stand firm in the faith and to play the man is due to one thing and one thing only—America's democracy. At the outset of the war we were told by the fool that we were fighting against autocracy for the democratic cause. We know better now. Indeed, it is becoming clearer every day that the hostilities of a year have thoroughly discredited the principle of democracy. Even Lord Haldane is uneasy in his mind about the system, which has served him well; and he has been unable to overcome the itch, which still afflicts him, to write or speak. Were he gifted with prudence, he would preserve a sterner silence even than President Wilson's. He cannot open his mouth or take up his pen without making himself ridiculous. It is difficult to discover from his words whether he is a simpleton or is merely what the French call "inconscient." A true diagnosis perhaps would pronounce him a simpleton with a dash of cunning. His last pronouncement — on the fertile subject of democracy— appears to be another attempt to rid himself of the responsibility of failure. He would now throw the whole burden of blame upon the people. "Our own citizens," he announces blandly, "have never been receptive in the same way as the Germans, nor has it been their habit to call upon their leaders to think strenuously for them." From which we may conclude that in Lord Haldane's view no leader need "think strenuously" unless he be called upon. Nor is this the worst. "When the time comes to take stock," the noble Viscount goes on, "I think the wonder will be, not that we were so unprepared, but that we were as well prepared as was the case. For the public did not insist that the unrest of Europe should be the foremost subject of political consideration."

Here, then, is the newest doctrine of democracy. The highly-paid leader need do nothing for the comfortable salary which he receives. He is not asked to lead; it is not his business to instruct his con-

stituents. If the public insists on driving the country to ruin because it does not see the unrest of Europe, the leaders may, apparently with a clear conscience, lull them deeper into their blind slumber. For ten years Lord Haldane has been a paid public servant. For some of these years it was his duty, if he were earning his salary, to see that the country was prepared for war. He did not do his duty, and he is sure that the wonder presently will be that we were as well prepared as we were. We, who are not politicians, can only rub our eyes in astonishment at this monstrous doctrine, which is the very syndicalism of politics. We have always been simple enough to believe that our political leaders assumed the burden of leadership. And now we are told by Lord Haldane that the public did not insist that "the unrest of Europe should be the foremost subject of political consideration"; the corollary of which is that the public alone is to blame.

Though we have never held a lofty view of democracy, we did not know that its most zealous champions had sunk it to that depth of imbecility. All the great leaders of the past —Chatham, Pitt, Castlereagh, Disraeli, even Peel, unscrupulous though he was—devised the policy which they thought best for the country, and forced the electorate to accept it if they could. They would have scorned to prove themselves the inactive slaves of a vague and indeterminate public opinion. It was theirs to instruct, to command, not to learn the wishes of a many-headed master, nor to take orders with cap in hand. But Lord Haldane and his colleagues have fallen very far below the older standard of parliamentary life. They have found it tiresome to tell the people unpalatable truths; they have been bored at the mere suggestion of thinking for themselves. So they have thrown the responsibility upon the public, and are ready to fling the blame after it. What they have not explained is why, if they do no more than obey the public, they have been paid £5000 or even £10,000 a year.

It is an ugly thing to take large sums of the public money and to give nothing in exchange, and that is what it seems our governors have been doing. If it is merely a matter of registering "the will of the people," a clerk at thirty shillings a week could have done all that Lord Haldane appears to think necessary. And have the Radicals, we wonder, shown themselves even efficient registers? They obtained power in 1906 by a lucky fluke, which did as little credit to their astuteness as to their sense of political honour. The lie about Chinese labour, to which they owed their enormous majority, came near to being rejected by their wirepullers not because it was a lie, but because they thought it might not pay. When the ignoble trick succeeded, the leaders, who refuse to lead, persistently underrated

the intelligence of their supporters. The British electorate is not very astute, but we believe that if its Ministers had more wisely understood their duties it would have seen something better in politics than the greed of money and the odious principle of something for nothing.

However, these are the only lessons which Lord Haldane and his colleagues thought fit to teach the citizens of England; and now Lord Haldane, with a sublime impudence, complains that they did not perceive the unrest of Europe. How, indeed, should they, when not one in a thousand could recognise the map of Europe when he saw it, or knew the purpose of Germany's ambition? Lord Haldane, on the other hand, was the Kaiser's friend; we have been told (and do not believe) that he can speak German; he was privileged to converse with Chancellors and Generals in the very heart of Berlin. Why did he say no word to the public, to whom the unrest of Europe was an unpierced mystery? Perhaps it was too much trouble; perhaps he thought it wouldn't pay at the polling-booth. Whatever his motive was, he held his tongue, and now complains that "as a nation we are deficient in the reflective spirit"!

Were it not tragic, what a comedy would be here! Lord Haldane deplores the "scepticism" of the democracy, and declares that "it can only be overcome if the leaders of democracy, whether in the Senate or in the press or in the public, will themselves get ideas and express them with conviction and even passion." For ten years Lord Haldane has been a leader with full powers. Did he get ideas, and having got them did he express them with passion? Not he. On the contrary, he exerted all his ingenuity to thwart and ridicule the ideas of others. There was one man who never wavered in his desire to explain to his countrymen what was the meaning of the unrest in Europe, and by what means alone could we hope to soothe the unrest. That man was Lord Roberts. He at any rate had an idea, intelligible, patriotic, and, as events have proved, necessary for our national salvation. Did Lord Haldane and his friends welcome it as something which might overcome the scepticism of democracy? No: they repelled it with all their force; they denounced the single-minded hero who put it forth as the enemy of peace; they went down into the city to apologise for the insult which they said he had offered to a great and friendly power; and as far as we know not one of them has since betrayed the smallest sign of honest shame.

All the ministers treated Lord Roberts with contumely. It was Lord Haldane, the clamourer for ideas, who made himself an artist in impertinence. It was Lord Haldane who, vaunting his own prowess in military matters, dismissed Lord Roberts

as no strategist. It was Lord Haldane who composed his own epitaph: here lies one who buried conscription in a deep grave. Does he take pride in that achievement still, when he contemplates the roll of honour in his daily paper? We do not suppose that he thinks about it at all; it is not the business of a democratic leader to think; blood-guiltiness lies lightly on the politician's back. But we do know that he and Mr Asquith have signed the death-warrant of democracy in England. They have abolished, at the bidding of another, the second chamber, without which democracy cannot safely exist, and by passing the Trade Disputes Act they have degraded us to the worst form of democracy, that denounced by Aristotle, in which not the law but the multitude has the supreme power, and supersedes the law by its decrees. So much they have done for the democracy which they pretend to respect. They have given it no guidance; they have stoned in the market-place those who could have taught it better things. They have seen it go into battle unarmed and unprepared. And now Lord Haldane complains that it lacks the reflective spirit. Where, oh where, is his sense of humour?

FROM CAMBRAI TO WÜRZBURG.

BY AN EXCHANGED OFFICER.

I.

We had heard terrible stories at Cambrai of the sufferings endured by British soldiers on the way to Germany.

I know that in the early days of September hospital wards were cleared wholesale, and the wounded, no matter what their conditions, were packed off in cattle-trucks. Their uniforms, especially their greatcoats, were taken from them: they were given no food on the journey, and in some cases were treated with great brutality.

But gradually an improvement was noticeable, and wounded prisoners who went off about Christmas time were able to travel under somewhat better conditions than those who had been hurried off in the autumn.

Towards the end of the year the number of English wounded at Cambrai had dwindled from several hundred to about forty or fifty, mostly serious cases. How these poor fellows used to dread the German inspections! The doctors came round once a week to make out a list of those considered "transportable." A thorough examination was always made, the bandage taken off, and if the wounded soldier's name went on the list it meant farewell to good food, comfortable beds, and the kind French nurses.

The German doctor whose duty it was to carry out the weekly inspections at Cambrai was Generaloberartzt Schmitt of the "Königliche Bayerische erste Reserve Corps."

I had been four months in hospital when my name was put down on the list of "transportable," and a place was reserved for me in the "Zug Lazaret."

These trains were made up according to the output from the different hospitals along the front, chiefly from Lille, Douai, Cambrai, and St Quentin.

After the pressure of traffic consequent on the rush back from the Marne had subsided, a regular hospital-train service was inaugurated, and trains direct to Munich were run once a week.

When I expressed some fears to Dr Schmitt as to how I would be treated on my journey, he laughed, saying something about German culture, and that one must not believe all the tales one hears about the Germans. At any rate, he assured me I had nothing to fear, for instructions had been given to pay every attention that the nature of my wound required, and I was to travel

by a special Lazaret with a comfortable bed and plenty of good food from a restaurant car.

In the light of subsequent experiences I am sometimes rather suspicious of my friend's kindly intentions. The German idea of humour is so different from any other. I often wonder if Dr Schmitt had been "pulling my leg" in his clumsy German way!

However, when the motor-ambulance came to fetch me at 10 A.M. on the 6th of January, I started off on my journey quite free in my mind from painful anticipations. I pictured to myself a comfortable hospital-train, with perhaps a German Schwester to look after the worst cases, and if not a made-up bed at least a stretcher on which I could rest my paralysed limbs.

On arriving at Cambrai station I found that the "special hospital train" consisted of ordinary 3rd Class corridor coaches, which were packed with French and English wounded. I was helped along the train by two kindly German soldiers, and lifted up into a 2nd Class carriage, where I was warmly greeted by a French Army doctor, like myself *en route* for a German prison.

One side of the carriage had been made up as a bed, and the nice white sheets looked most inviting. However, my satisfaction with what I supposed to be the arrangements for my comfort was short-lived. I had scarcely time for more than a few words with the French doctor when a German officer, a lieutenant, appeared at the door. His message was brief and easy to understand. I was to get out.

In spite of my protests, this officer attempted to make me climb down on to the platform, but as this was quite beyond my powers, he allowed me to crawl along the corridor. At the far end of the train was a 3rd Class corridor coach of the usual continental type with hard wooden seats, the partitions running only half-way to the roof. This coach was full of wounded French and English soldiers, among whom I recognised several who had been in hospital with me, but I was not allowed to speak to them. At the end of the coach was a compartment, one side of which had been transformed into a bed by nailing up a board against the seat, which was covered with straw.

I was assisted on to my bed of straw by a German N.C.O., who, along with three other soldiers, all with loaded rifles and fixed bayonets, took up all the remaining room in the carriage. It was evident that I was to be efficiently guarded.

I took no notice of my escort, but kept an eye on the platform, as I wished to get a hold of some German officer of high rank, in order to protest against my removal from the 2nd Class carriage. Presently an inspecting officer, a captain, I think, came along the train.

I explained to this officer that the wound in my head

was only newly healed, that I was still quite paralysed on one side, and that Dr Schmitt had arranged (as I thought) for my proper accommodation on the journey.

I requested permission to be allowed to travel along with the French officer from whose company I had been somewhat rudely shifted.

The German officer standing on the platform listened to what I had to say, and when I had finished, he got on to the footboard, looked through my carriage window at the wooden bed, the straw, and the three sentries, and then I got my answer: "Das ist schön für ein Engländer."

This was my first lesson in German Kultur. I thanked the contemptuous German most heartily, and I fancy that my exaggerated politeness somewhat annoyed him.

Although I did not appear to be taking any notice of my sentries, I could not avoid catching the eye of the man opposite, who kept on glaring at me with a most objectionable persistency.

I looked at him in my most benevolent manner, but made no attempt at conversation.

When presently the others got up and went out into the corridor, this man's conduct became most alarming. He was evidently under stress of some strong emotion. Suddenly his whole manner changed. Laying a finger on his lips with a warning gesture, he bent towards me and said in a low, tense voice, "Moi aussi je hais les Allemands."

In spite of the hatred in his voice and the bitter look which accompanied the words, I did not show much eagerness to follow up this somewhat startling opening for conversation. I was rather afraid of some trap. One had heard stories of prisoners on the way to Germany being taken out of the train and shot on the accusation of having spoken of the Fatherland in an unbecoming manner or on some similar trumped-up charge. All attempt at further conversation was, however, put a stop to by the return of the other sentries.

The soldier opposite, whether friend or foe I knew not, remained silent and motionless in his corner, although from time to time he favoured me with a malevolent stare, while his companions took hardly any notice of me at all. It was some time before another opportunity occurred for private conversation. However, at some country station the three soldiers got out to get a drink of coffee, leaving me alone with the mysterious sentry. Again his manner changed, and again bending forward, he hissed with a hatred in his voice that seemed very genuine, "Moi aussi je hais les Allemands."

And then in atrociously bad French my "friendly" enemy threw light on his mysterious behaviour, by explaining that he was a Pole, and was under orders to join at Valenciennes some reinforcements that were

being hurried up to Arras. "I have to go on," he said; "I cannot help myself, but I will never aim straight at the French or English."

I suggested that he might perhaps manage to get taken prisoner, but he answered that it would be most difficult, as all Poles were kept separate from their fellow-countrymen and closely watched.

Any shirking in the firing line would mean instant death at the hand of some Bavarian comrade.

He begged me not to betray by any word or sign that we had conversed together, because he was looked upon with suspicion by the other soldiers, and for that reason had feigned intense hatred of the English. This was the explanation of the malevolent stare at me. At this point the other sentries returned, and no further opportunity for conversation occurred.

My newly found friend was evidently worrying over his miserable lot. He took out a well-thumbed Feld postkarte, and as he read one could see that his thoughts were far away with the wife and children from whose side he had been dragged to fight for the hereditary enemies of his country. I shall not easily forget the sadness of the man's face. A young face with very dark, dog-like eyes. There was nothing smart about him; he was indeed rather more dirty than even a travel-stained soldier from Poland had any right to be. As I looked at him I thought of the countless numbers of German soldiers whose lives had been sacrificed in vain efforts to capture the French position at Arras. And this man was to be one more. His fate was perhaps the hardest of all. For him there would not even be the soldier's last consolation of duty done. As the train drew up at Valenciennes the soldiers in my carriage began to put on their equipment, and when the train had stopped they all got out. My Polish friend went out last, and as he left the carriage he turned round and bade me with his eyes a silent and almost appealing farewell.

Valenciennes is an important junction, forming a central point from which the railway line branches off to both the French and the English front. Moreover, the principal base hospital had been transferred here from Cambrai early in October, so I was not surprised to find the platform crowded with Red Cross attendants, stretcher-bearers, doctors, railway transport officers and soldiers representing all parts of the German Empire. Now that my Polish friend and his two comrades had gone I was left alone with the fat *unter-officier*, who took the first opportunity that was offered of exercising his authority over me.

It was a very mild evening for January, and as I soon got tired of watching the crowd of German soldiery, whose presence in France is an outrage that cannot be fully realised by

merely reading about it in the papers, I leant out of the window on the opposite side of the train. The contrast was striking. Not a soldier was in sight, and the little French town, as far as one could see from my carriage window, seemed abnormally quiet. To make complete the illusions of peace, a grey-headed French railway employee in his blue blouse came sauntering down the line.

When he reached my carriage and saw the British uniform, he cordially wished me good-evening, and asked where I had been wounded. I did not get further in the conversation than to return the "bonsoir" when my sentry rushed across the carriage, threw up the window, and in a voice meant to be most terrifying thundered out that "to speak out of the window was 'verboten.'"

I said I was sorry, but did not know it to be "verboten." This inoffensive remark produced a regular parade scolding, accompanied by an interesting exhibition of "eye rolling," which forms an important part of German military discipline.

The lecture ended up with a dramatic pointing of the finger to an enormous high up stomach and "Ich verbiet." I said "all right."

This seemed about to cause another storm, so I hurriedly translated it into "Ist gut."

My guardian, still rumbling, went out into the corridor; I opened the window again, and the train moved slowly out of the station.

The train did not stop again until we were well over the Belgian frontier.

I did not see any frontier marks, nor did we stop at any frontier stations. A rough calculation, however, of the distance we had gone from Valenciennes showed that we must have reached Belgium about 6 A.M. As the train was now going very slowly, I was able to observe the countryside with more attention, and I was eagerly looking out for some landmark that might enable me to recognise the road along which we had marched on our way up to Mons nearly five months before.

Our first stop in Belgium was at a small country station, the name of which I have forgotten. This place must have been just on the fringe of the fighting during the last week of August. It was here that began the trail of the Hun.

The station was a complete wreck, and in the adjoining village only one house seemed to have escaped destruction. Temporary shelters had been rigged up with corrugated iron all along the platform, at the end of which was a wooden Red Cross dressing-station.

These dressing-stations have been set up at every station, however small, all along the line between the German frontier and the front, and form a striking example of German organisation and efficiency. They consist of two

small rooms, one of which can be used as an operating-room, and is stocked with first-aid appliances and a small pharmacy. The whole building can be taken down and set up elsewhere in a very short time.

The country now presented a melancholy sight, and as the railway line itself had been much damaged, the speed of the train was reduced to a crawl over the numerous temporary wooden railway bridges.

In Belgium the railway line was always strongly guarded, while in France I hardly noticed any troops except at the railway stations. From the moment we entered Belgium it was evident that a great number of soldiers were billeted in the villages and towns, or rather in the huts that had been constructed amidst the ruins. In fact, the German soldiers seemed in this district to have taken the place of the Belgian population, as between the frontier and Mons I do not remember seeing a single Belgian. Of course, at this time I did not know that thousands of Belgians had fled to England, nor had I heard anything more than vague rumours of German atrocities, such as the burning of Louvain and the indiscriminate murder of the civilian population in many parts of Belgium. I was therefore somewhat at a loss to understand why the railway line was so very much more carefully guarded in Belgium than it was in France, and why the civilian population seemed to have almost disappeared.

As we began to enter the mining district in which the town of Mons is situated, I looked out of my prison window with renewed interest at the more dominant features of the landscape, which I could now recognise quite distinctly.

At one time the line followed for a short time the very road along which we had marched on the 22nd August, the day before the battle of Mons, happy in our ignorance of all that was to come.

It was along this same straight road lined with tall poplar trees that the grey-clad German soldiers had been rushed on in motor cars, that the hundreds of machine-guns and light artillery had hurried with the hope, that was so nearly realised at Le Cateau, of destroying what was left of the little British army. Further on the line skirts the now famous Canal de Condé.

The effect of the German shell-fire was very noticeable along the banks of the canal. Most of the houses within a hundred yards of the water had been totally destroyed, so that the ground between the railway line and the canal was now fairly open. On the right side of the line the damage had not been so considerable; still even on that side fully fifty per cent of the houses were roofless. As far as a limited view from the railway would allow me to judge I do not think the upper part of the town was much knocked

about. Most of the German shelling on the 23rd had been directed on the British positions along the canal, and any damage that was done in the town itself was probably caused by the British guns' attempt to check the German advance through the town later in the afternoon.

The lower part of the town of Mons reminded me of the streets of Pompeii. The silent ruins had been abandoned even by the German soldiers. Here and there some rough attempt had been made to provide shelter, and we passed a few miserable women and children who were standing grouped in the doorways of their shattered homes. We entered the station of Mons at about 7 P.M. Here, as far as could be seen, everything seemed quite normal, and no traces were visible of the storm that must have raged all around during that eventful August day when British troops had paid their flying visit to the town.

The platform side of the train was quite deserted, so I turned my attention to the other window, and was presently accosted by a German railway soldier. I at once surmised from his opening remark and evil-looking face that he was intent on "prisoner baiting." I naturally pretended not to understand, and he thereupon became most annoyed. The expression of his humorous thought was that "the English were all going to Berlin, and the verdamnte English would verdamnt well stay there for ever." I shook my head and said "nicht verstehe."

Then followed a sort of pantomime repetition of the same idea slowly spoken in simple words. Again I shook my head. Then a brilliant idea struck him: "Parlez vous Francais?" "Oui," said I. But all the French he could muster consisted of "A Berlin." This was yelled out in a loud voice with great enthusiasm.

I then constructed a sentence in very bad German to the effect that our train was not going to Berlin but to Munich. This got rid of him, as he evidently thought it was hopeless to make the thick-headed Engländer understand his subtle German humour, and off he went shouting "ABerlin, A Berlin!"

The fat N.C.O. who had been standing in the corridor during this interview now came into the carriage, and I asked him if there was any dinner going, and was told that it would be brought along presently. It was not long before a party of soldiers appeared carrying two "dixies" of soup, a plateful of which was handed up.

It was thin vegetable soup, tasteless and stone cold. This was the "dinner from a restaurant car" that Dr Schmitt had told me about! My appetite would not rise to more than a spoonful of it, and I do not think even Oliver Twist would have asked for more. Fortunately my kind French friend at

Cambrai had provided me with a parcel of food, and I thought the time had come to take stock of its contents. I asked my corpulent attendant to reach me down the parcel, in which I found several "petit pains," some ham, and a large lengthy German sausage, upon which, as it rolled out of the paper, my guardian cast a swift but appreciative eye. I thought it might be a good idea to try and bribe him into a good temper, and ventured to ask for the loan of a knife! My request having been complied with, I sheared off a large piece of the sausage and stuck it on the end of the knife as I handed it back to its owner.

A grateful grunt showed that my offering to the stomach had found a weak spot in the enemy's armour, and from that moment we were comparatively friendly. After I had eaten some bread and ham I asked for something to drink, and was told that nothing was to be had except the thin cold soup. I had saved one or two cheap cigars from the hospital, and I settled down as best I could to smoke one of them.

I have forgotten to mention that there was a Red Cross attendant on the train, whose occupation consisted in slouching in the corridor and staring out of the window. He was a short, thick-set man, one of the dirtiest-looking I have ever seen in uniform. He wore a once white linen overall and a Red Cross badge on his arm. I do not know if he was qualified for Red Cross work, as he made no attempt or offer to help me or any of the other wounded men. Shortly after leaving Mons I began to feel symptoms of a bad headache coming on, and so I asked my guardian if there was a doctor on the train and if he could give me some aspirin. My request was passed on to the Red Cross attendant, who said he would go and ask the doctor.

It was now dark, and the train stopped at a number of small stations at each of which numbers of soldiers were billeted. Some of them always came up to my carriage to show off their knowledge of English. One or two of them were very rude, but the majority were merely interested and addressed me quite politely, sometimes in fluent English. One man I remember, who spoke just like an Englishman, said that he had been twelve years in England with a German band and knew all the coast towns. This fellow said he was very sorry "that England had made this War," as no Germans would like to go back there any more.

At several stations other German bandsmen spoke to me out of the darkness, and sometimes they climbed up on to the footboard and attempted to enter into discussions as to who started the War. England, of course, was declared to be the aggressor and originator of all the trouble, and some surprise mingled with hatred

was expressed at her action in thus attacking, for no apparent reason, a pacific industrial country like Germany. Of course I was not in a position to argue the point, and generally contented myself with asking whether they thought we had prepared an Expeditionary Force of 70,000 men to attack 7,000,000 Germans.

These men belonged for the most part to the Landsturm, and one of them told me they had been in billets for over two months. They seemed quite cheerful at the prospect of going nearer the firing line.

Conscription is, from the Germans' point of view, simply organised patriotism, although ignorant opponents of National Service are fond of sneering at the German conscript and assert that he will only fight when forced on with revolvers. I wish that some of our stay-at-home sneerers could have seen these crowds of German conscripts and heard the singing and laughter. If cheerfulness be one of the first qualities of a soldier these people possessed it to a very high degree.

At one station a soldier who was, I think, rather full of beer, hung on to the foot-board outside my window and attempted to be offensive in a mixture of German and English. His peroration was coming to an end as the train began to move, but he clung on and delivered his final shaft: "England is the enemy and will be punished." However, his own punishment was near at hand, for when he attempted to jump off the train, which was running fairly fast, he made a false step and fell heavily on the back of his head and, as it seemed to me, right under the wheels of the train.

My sentry, who under the influence of sausage had become quite communicative, remarked that the man was drunk and deserved all he got.

Symptoms were now developing of a serious headache such as I had experienced once before in hospital. On asking the Red Cross attendant if he had taken my message to the doctor, I was told that it would have to wait till the next stop, and by the time we got to Charleroi I was in the fast grip of an acute neuralgic attack.

Entrance to the platform at Charleroi had evidently been *verboten*, for there was no one on the platform, although a great crowd of soldiers could be seen at the far end of the station, which was brilliantly lighted with electric arc lamps.

I again asked my sentry to get me some relief. He was quite sympathetic, and I think began to realise that I was getting rather bad. He told me that the Red Cross attendant had gone to the doctor and would be back before long. The very great pain was made worse by the knowledge that the two or three tablets of aspirin, for which I had waited so long, would afford instant relief. At last the Red Cross attendant came along the corridor and made some sign to the sentry

who went out to speak to him. They talked for a long time, and seemed to be arguing about something. Every minute was more painful than the last, and then, to my relief, the sentry came back. I stretched out my hand for the aspirin. "Nicht," he said, "the doctor sends a message, 'tell the Englishman not to smoke cigars and he will not have a headache.'"

Looking back now on this incident I am inclined to acquit the German doctor of all blame, although at the time I was full of wrath at what I supposed to be callous indifference and cruelty, surprising in even a German member of the medical profession. The most likely explanation is that the dirty Red Cross attendant had never taken my message to the doctor at all.

The only thing now was to get some sleep while the train was at rest, as I knew that when the jolting began again sleep would be quite impossible.

My desire for rest was not, however, to be satisfied, for the sentry leant out of the window on my side of the carriage and started a conversation with somebody on the platform. I was surprised to hear that he was talking to a woman, and on looking up to see who it was, a pleasant voice bade me "Good-evening" in perfect English.

A pretty young Red Cross nurse stood there at the window. The sight of her, the kindness with which she spoke, the sympathetic look, were for a moment as unreal to me as the memory of a dream. "Is there anything I can do for you?" she said; "I hope you are not very badly wounded." As soon as she knew of my headache she went running along the train, and was back almost at once with three large tablets of aspirin. "I am so glad to be able to help you," she said; "I promised my friends in England that I would do all in my power to help the poor English wounded."

I could not find words to thank her then, and I cannot find them now. Never did I need kindness more, and never was a kind deed more kindly done.

Before the train started off again the good sister came back to ask how I was feeling, and wished me well on my journey.

The relief to the pain was almost immediate, and in spite of the renewed joltings, and the hard bed which afforded small comfort to a semi-paralysed man, I slept soundly for the rest of the night.

II.

The day had not long dawned when I awoke cramped and stiff so that I could hardly move, but still refreshed by much-needed sleep, and above all free of the previous night's

headache. My sentry, who had also slept well, was good enough to ask how I felt, and said we were going to Aachen, but he could not or would not say if this was to be our ultimate destination.

We reached Aachen about 8.30, and a more miserable morning could not be imagined. It had evidently rained hard all night, and the downpour showed no signs of abating.

Looking out at the pretty little town half hidden in the mist that hung over the wooded hills, I was wondering if this was to be our journey's end, when I saw what looked like two British officers walking along the station road. There was no mistake about the British Warm coats! Of course they were Germans, who doubtless found the British uniform more suited than their own to the steadily drenching rain!

Our journey was not, however, to finish here, for soon the sentry, who had been standing in the corridor, came back and said that we had to change and get into another train.

When lifted down on to the platform I was too stiff to walk even with the crutches, and had to be taken across the station on a stretcher. There were several other stretcher cases—about ten or twelve—but the majority managed to hobble along by themselves.

We were a most miserable looking party; all the men, both British and French, were dressed in French uniforms, and one or two, whom I spoke to, said that they had had no food since leaving Cambrai.

The train we were now being packed into was of a more antiquated type than the one we had left. A very narrow corridor ran down the centre of the coach, the narrow wooden seats on each side being made to hold four people. It was with great difficulty that I crawled along the corridor through the crowd of wounded soldiers, mostly French, who, too miserable, too hungry and too cold for speech, were trying to huddle together as well as their wounded condition would allow.

The corridor led into a carriage with four very narrow wooden seats, which were occupied by four British soldiers and one stout sentry. This was to be my accommodation for the rest of the journey. I pointed out to my sentry, who had followed me from the other train, that it was impossible for me to travel otherwise than lying down, and that even for able-bodied passengers the carriage was overcrowded. Also I demanded anew to be allowed to travel with the French doctor, whom I now saw being escorted along the platform to the rear end of the train. My protest was of no avail, and on inquiring who was the officer in charge of the train I was told it was the doctor who had refused the aspirin, so concluded that further expostulation would be useless. My luggage, consisting of a small canvas port-

manteau and a brown paper parcel with the sausage, &c., was now brought along, and took up what small space remained in the carriage.

We were now five wounded men and two very corpulent sentries, and the problem of how to divide the available space presented some difficulty.

Two of the men, like myself, were unable to travel in a sitting position. We had four seats, one of which was more than occupied by the two sentries. The other three had to be given to those who could not sit up, and so the remaining two men had to lie on the hard floor.

Although all these men had been very severely wounded, and were still in great pain, they had no thought for themselves, but insisted upon doing everything that they could to settle me as comfortably as possible. My bag was put at the end of a corner seat, and, making a pillow with my great-coat, I was able to get into a half sitting, half lying, and by no means comfortable position, but the best that could be done under the circumstances.

A British Tommy's cheerfulness is irrepressible.

The knocking about may have been severe, the situation may be desperate, and the outlook depressing, but you will nearly always find the British soldier cheerful in spite of all.

I remember an old monastic exhortation written in the eighth century entitled: "De octo principalibus vitiis," where sadness is bracketed along with pride, covetousness, lust, and the other familiar vices, while cheerfulness is placed high on the list of virtues. I can now appreciate the old monks' valuation of cheerfulness, and for the lesson I have to thank those wounded soldiers in the railway carriage at Aachen.

They were as cheery as soldiers on furlough. For nearly four hours the train waited just outside the dripping station and we spent most of the time laughing! In fact, we were so hilarious that I think our sentries got suspicious; at any rate they were considerably bewildered at our strange conduct. We none of us had much to laugh at. The most helpless man in our carriage was a young fellow of nineteen, in the K.O.S.B.'s, whose leg had been broken just above the shin, and a piece of the bone knocked away. This man was subsequently exchanged, and we journeyed home to England together. Two other men had bullet wounds in the thigh which were still septic; and the fourth, an Irishman from Carlow, had been very badly wounded in the face, having lost the sight of one eye, was also deaf in one ear and shockingly disfigured.

The rain still poured heavily down, and we were still, at 12.30 P.M., outside Aachen station.

At last a man who looked like a soldier of high rank, but was merely the station-master, came in escorted by a German private to count us. He informed our sentries that we

were about to start for Mainz, and before going out the German soldier snatched the French kepi from the disfigured Irishman and gave him his German round soft cap in exchange. It is a cheap and very common method of obtaining a war trophy!

It was now time to make inquiries about lunch, and we were told we would get nothing till we got to Mainz at seven o'clock.

Every one of us had been supplied by the kind French people at Cambrai with bread and cold meat, chocolate and biscuits, so that we were able to make quite a decent meal. Still I made a point of always asking the Germans for food before using our own. It was with the greatest difficulty that we at last got something to drink. Our sentries did not show any ill-feeling, and it was not their fault that nothing was given us; it was simply that no arrangements had been made. At about four in the afternoon we each got a cup of what was meant for tea, and this was the first liquid we had since the previous morning.

The sentries were provided with coffee and sandwiches at every station, which was always brought to the carriage by women dressed in uniform. They belonged to an association which has been formed for the purpose of supplying soldiers on transport duty with hot drinks.

I inquired of one of these ladies if there was not an association for supplying prisoners of war with food and drink, and was rewarded with a solemn serious negative.

The train did not get on very fast, and we stopped a good many times just outside the stations; waits lasting sometimes over an hour. Although the amount of data regarding the internal conditions of a country which can be obtained from a carriage window on a journey such as we were making is certainly not extensive, still I noted a good many interesting points.

Civilians, of course, were few and far between. At the stations and in the public places, and as far as I could see in the streets, nearly all were in uniform, young and old. Some of the older men wore very quaint-looking garments. I have seen more civilians on the platform of one English country station than I saw at all the German stations together between Cambrai and Würzburg.

Railway work, such as unloading coal, &c., from the trucks, was being done by boys of twelve to fifteen, working in gangs of about six, doing the work of two or three men. *All* the railway engine-drivers and employees I saw were men obviously above military age.

The stations are all under military control, and transport work is carried on by soldiers.

Troop trains passed incessantly. The men, who I should say were about twenty years old, were cheerful and always singing, just like our own troops are fond of doing, only the Ger-

mans sing much better! They shouted out greetings to the wounded Germans on our train, and looked with curiosity at the French and British soldiers. When the troop train happened to draw up opposite us, sometimes a fist would be shaken in the air, accompanied by what sounded like very bad language. But the general spirit shown by these young German troops towards our train-load of wounded prisoners was that of contempt and pity of victors for the vanquished. The men were splendidly equipped, and many regiments carried a long spade strapped on to the back of their kit, the iron head stretching high above the helmet. I remember starting to count the troop trains, but I cannot find any note of the number in my diary. I should put the number we saw in one day at from fifteen to twenty.

In the public squares of the smaller towns, and even outside some of the country villages, groups of youths, almost children, were being put through elementary military exercises.

The train stopped at one small countryside station, and I got a very good view of some German troops having a field day! They were preparing to advance on the village through some woods, and the sight reminded me of the German attacks on our trenches at Mons.

Nothing that I could observe from my carriage window spoke more eloquently of the efforts Germany was making than the goods traffic which passed along the line or lay shunted at the stations.

The very trucks themselves were eloquent of war and of Germany's success in war. Belgian rolling stock was very much in evidence, and it was depressing to see the well-known French vans with the inscription, "hommes 40, chevaux 12," familiar to all who have travelled in France. There were also a few strange-looking waggons, either Russian or Polish.

Nearly all the goods trains were carrying war material. Long trains were standing on the sidings with Red Cross Ambulances on every truck.

We passed countless numbers of trains loaded with broad wooden planks and stout larch poles, doubtless intended for the erection of earthworks. Most instructive was the sight of one long train of about thirty trucks loaded with private motor cars of all sorts and sizes, which had been hurriedly painted with grey stripes and some sort of notice indicating Government service. Once we passed a train with heavy artillery on specially constructed waggons, and we saw several trains of ordinary field artillery. These trains of troops, munitions, motor-cars, coal, and a hundred other weapons of war that were hidden from view, the whole methodical procession of supplies to the Front, were most suggestive of power, of concentration, and organisation of effort. Most impressive was

this glimpse of Germany at war. It is difficult to convey the impression to those who have not seen Germany in a state of war. Men who have been at the Front see little of the power which is behind the machine against which they are fighting.

I do not think many people in this country, even in high places, have yet understood how great, as to be almost invincible, are the military and industrious resources of Germany.

The strength given by unity of purpose, by self-sacrifice of individual to national requirements, by organisation of disciplined masses, is the strength of Germany, behind which is the all-prevailing spirit of the motto, "Deutschland über Alles," the Fatherland above all things, and before all things. The end justifying the means in the name of a perverted patriotism, whose end is self-glorification, whose means include among other horrors the murder of an innocent and defenceless civilian population.

This German patriotism, a monstrous caricature of the noblest of virtues, is the only ideal which the brutal materialism of Prussia can still pretend to claim for its own.

Chivalry, honour, and a fair name, the ideals for which men will cheerfully die, Germany has destroyed and buried in the wreckage of Belgian homesteads.

In my carriage-window conversations with German soldiers, to whom it might have been dangerous to express myself as frankly as I have just done here, I always felt that I was dealing with people possessed by an "idée fixe." Evil, as long as it was German evil, was right.

Pride has brought these people to believe that all law, religious and ethical, should be subservient to the interests of the Fatherland. The German pride is something quite apart from the common conceit with which all men and all nations are afflicted, for the foolish British bumptiousness, which of late years has not been so much in evidence, due to ignorance and want of intercourse with Continental nations, does not strike deep enough into the national character to affect the moral sanity of the race. But German pride working through several generations has apparently destroyed all sense of right and wrong. It has become, therefore, impossible to convince the German people of wrong-doing.

I once ventured to say, in answer to one man who was very indignant with "England's treachery" (he was a kultured man and addressed me as a "hireling of La Perfide Albion"), that at any rate we had not invaded Belgium in breach of a solemn treaty. I fully expected to be chastised for my boldness, but my remark did not arouse any indignation. I was told quite simply that "even if there was any truth in my statement the necessity of Germany was supreme and above all."

Deutschland über alles!

At most of the stations we stopped at, men used to come into our carriage out of curiosity; some of them were rude and insulting, but very often they were eager to enter into conversation.

At one place an *unteroffizier*, who understood a little English but did not speak it, kept on repeating in German that England had made the War and tried to catch Germany unprepared, and that we were mobilised for war in July. I did not answer him, but turned round to the wounded soldier next me and said to him, "When did you mobilise?" All the men answered in chorus, "On the 5th August." "I don't know when you Germans mobilised," I said, "but you were fighting in Belgium on the day we mobilised."

In most of their conversations the question of who was going to win was not raised, for the Germans consider that they have won already, and they have no fears of being unable to maintain the territory they have conquered.

The prevailing sentiment towards England was contemptuous. I remember some soldiers at one place reading the news to my sentry out of a German paper, and one of the items was "Kitchener has organised an army of one million men." This statement caused considerable laughter, and when the sentry returned to our carriage I asked him where the joke lay. England, he then explained, for years had employed a small number of paid men to do whatever fighting was needed, and the nation could not now be drilled and made soldiers of, as they were not animated by the martial, manly spirit of Germany, and those few that did volunteer—he used the word with contempt—would require at least a year's training.

From such conversations as these, and from reading the German papers, I am convinced that the strongest ground of confidence the Germans possess is their contempt of England's military power. The Germans know far better than we do the weakness of our voluntary system. They know that if the full power of the British Empire was brought against them, defeat would in the long-run be inevitable. But they believe, and I think rightly believe, that this can never come to pass without organisation and discipline of the whole country. No disaster to the German arms on the field of battle would have an effect on the morale of the German people such as would result from the knowledge that the English had recognised the principle of National Service.

But as long as England remains "le pays des embusqués," German opinion will not be influenced by speeches on "England's grim determination" made in Parliament or leaders written in our leading papers: Germany knows that grim determination is

shown not in words, but in deeds.

The day when England consents to the great sacrifice and faces the stern discipline of conscription, the present unshakable confidence of the German people will be changed into apprehensive despair.

I have interrupted the thread of my story to reply to those people who keep on telling us that we have done splendidly, that no one else could have done what we have done; that our voluntary army of one or two or three million men, whatever it may be, is the most wonderful creation of all history; and so on to the Navy and its great deeds. The litany of praise is familiar to all, and a good deal of it is true.

But the point of the question is not what we have done, but what we have left undone, since nothing less will suffice than the maximum possible effort.

III.

I forgot to mention that either at Mons or Charleroi, I am not sure which, a sheet of paper containing all the latest war news, some printed in English and some in French, was handed to all the prisoners on the train. I have kept this interesting document, the heading of which is as follows: "A short account of facts from Official German and Foreign War Reports. 'This english [*sic*] is also published in German and Spanish.' Free of charge from the Publisher, Mrs Von Puttkamer, Hamburg, Paulstrasse 9/11."

This sheet, which purports to contain the war news for November, is evidently a monthly concoction. I append some extracts:—

Nov. 1. "Turkey declares the 'holy War.' 2000 armed Bedouins attack Egypt. As a result of bad treatment 17 Germans die in the English Concentration Camp at Farmley."

Nov. 5. "Field-Marshal French meets with a bad accident. Conquered English cannons placed for exhibition before the Hamburg Town Hall, amidst the plaudits of the people."

Nov. 6. "As a counter measure all Englishmen in Germany between the ages of 17 and 55 interned at Ruhleben by Berlin."

Then follows a long list of German victories on all fronts, with just a passing reference to the loss of the *Emden* and the fall of Tsingtau.

Nov. 15. "Storm of indignation from all Mohammedens over the English attack against Akaba, the Holy City of Islam. Lord Roberts dies in London at age of 82."

Nov. 17. "As a result of German submarines in the channel no more English transport of troops takes place."

Nov. 18. "The Times says that it is becoming clearer every day to prominent patriots of Germany, that it is not possible to beat England. 'As I also belong to the leading men mentioned, I attach great importance

to it, to prove well founded the fact that, in my opinion, England is already beaten, as an England that hides its fleet in such a war as this, and does not venture to sea, has ceased to be the England of old. It has once for all renounced its right to speak when a question of the European balance of power is dealt with.'—*Ballin.*"

Nov. 22. "Successful fight of the Turks against English and Russians at Schotel-Arab. 750 English troops killed and 1000 wounded. The Turks reach the Suez Canal."

Nov. 25. "The Turks controll [*sic*] the Suez Canal at Kantara."

The total number of prisoners claimed to have been captured in the month of November works out at 268,508, and on one single day, the 14th Nov., 10,000 guns and a quantity of ammunition were taken as booty.

Mrs Von Puttkamer must have taken considerable trouble with this singular document, and I cannot understand with what object it was distributed broadcast among the prisoners. The only result of reading such an obviously biassed account of the war was that, as we had no means of discriminating between what was true and what was false, we did not pay the least attention to any of it.

The three wounded men who had been over four months in bed, and whose wounds were not yet healed, were now suffering a great deal of pain from the cramped position, the jolting of the train, and from want of nourishing food. They had tried to get some relief by lying on the floor of the carriage, where they finally settled together in a heap.

The sentry, with whom I was by this time on the best of terms, began to grow sentimental at the thought of meeting his wife and children, with whom he was to spend a week's leave in the neighbourhood of Coblenz. I tried to find out if he had heard of any talk about a proposed exchange of prisoners, but he could not or would not give me any information.

Light was failing as we reached the Rhine valley. The train crawled slowly under the shadow of the vine-covered cliffs, far to the west the rain-clouds were drifting away as if driven by the last rays of the setting sun, which they had hidden during the day. We had no light in the carriage, and the blackness of the interior darkness was relieved only by the twinkling lights on the distant banks of the Rhine. By the time the train reached Coblenz the wounded men, though not asleep, were in a condition of dormant torpor, while the sentries slept heavily, dreaming, no doubt, of their soon-to-be-met-once-more buxom fraus.

At Coblenz most of the German wounded who had started with us from Cambrai came to their journey's end, and the station was crowded with Red Cross people who had come to meet them. There were no serious cases, nearly all arms and a few

superficial head wounds. Here also we saw the last of our two fat sentries, and their place was taken by two men who belonged to some very antiquated sort of Bavarian Landsturm, harmless, inoffensive creatures both of them. They actually put their rifles up on the rack, whereas the other sentries had clung tight to theirs on the whole journey from Cambrai. We immediately got permission to smoke, which had been refused us before, and I again made inquiries about food and drink with the usual result. No arrangements had been made for feeding prisoners, and as our own stock of food was getting low an effort had to be made to get something done.

It was not long before the doctor in charge of the Coblenz ambulance, tall and thin, with a black beard, came along inspecting the wounded. He asked if there were any men who required to have their wounds dressed, explaining that we would get to our destination the next day, and he would not dress any one except if absolutely necessary.

The men said they preferred to wait, and I then pointed out to the doctor that the accommodation for five badly wounded men was insufficient, so that they had to lie on top of each other on the floor, and that we had been given practically no food since we left Cambrai.

The doctor answered that no other accommodation was available, and he expressed some indignation at our not having had any food, promising to send some along at once. We got some nice hot coffee, a large piece of German black bread, with a roll and sausage each, and made our first meal at German expense.

After the train started on again the big sentry, who looked rather like a Scotch Highlander, and came no doubt from the mountain forests of Bavaria, produced a couple of night-lights, with whose slender flickering the carriage was dimly lit up.

Our new sentries had no idea of discipline or duty whatever. They seemed to look upon themselves as showmen travelling with a collection of curious beasts, for at every station we stopped at people took it in turns to come right into the carriage, and we met with considerable annoyance and impertinence from many of them. One German, who said he was shortly going to the front to kill some Englanders, tried to drag my great-coat from me, but this was too much for the sentry, who ordered him to desist.

Owing to the constant entry of these unwelcome visitors it now became impossible to think of sleep, for whenever I tried or pretended to doze I was pulled up and asked to answer some impertinent questions.

The type of German soldier that now began to predominate was of a far different class to what we had met with before. It is probable that the men we had conversed with between

Cambrai and Coblenz had been to a certain extent tamed by experience at the front, whereas the older and more ignorant class of Landsturm, who at every station forced their attentions upon us, spoke to us and about us as if we were dangerous criminals, and on several occasions if it had not been for the sentries we would have been roughly handled.

It was at Aschaffenburg, on the Bavarian frontier, that we had occasion to be really alarmed at the hostile attitude of the crowd on the station platform.

We reached Aschaffenburg at three in the morning, and were informed that we were to stop there for five hours. There was nothing for it but to try and get some sleep; this, however, was not to be allowed. A curious-looking mob of men dressed in bits of all uniforms collected outside our carriage and proceeded to go through a pantomimic exhibition of hate. The leader of this mob was a nasty-looking ruffian more than half drunk, who kept calling on us to come outside and fight; also threatening to come inside and cut our throats, and brandishing a big pocket-knife, he looked quite up to doing it. However, the mob, which was getting more and more excited, was eventually dispersed by an officer, who rebuked them for insulting men who were defenceless and disabled.

After the dispersal of this collection of ruffians, who looked as if they had stepped off the stage of a comic opera, we still continued to be plagued by a constant stream of visitors One group of these soldiers came in about five in the morning and behaved with great rudeness and brutality. The wounded men had by this time settled on to the floor of the carriage, all in a heap, and had fallen off to sleep.

The sentry was telling our visitors that one of the Englanders had been shot in the face and was badly disfigured. Whereupon a German soldier pulled the poor fellow out of the sleeping mass on the floor and sat him upon the seat, the others standing round pointing with their fingers at the poor mutilated face with coarse jeering laughter. The young Irish soldier sat patiently through it all — his blind eye was a running sore, the torn cheek in healing had left a hideously scarred hollow, and the mouth and nose were twisted to one side. His condition would have stirred pity in the heart of a savage, and yet these Germans laughed and jeered.

This scene comes back to me with a fresh bitterness when I see the able-bodied young civilians in this country, — they must number several millions, — who should be ashamed to be seen alive until the perpetration of deeds such as these have been brought to account.

This poor fellow came from County Carlow. Is there a man in Carlow or in all Ireland who could have witnessed this scene unmoved?

So much stronger is the im-

pression of things seen than things heard that, although I have second-hand evidence of far worse horrors—of wounded men shot, of men of a well-known regiment kicked and beaten along the road to a German prison—none of these things, no atrocity of Louvain, no story of women and children tortured, has moved me so much to a deep loathing of Germany as the pathetic sight of this young Irishman and his heartless tormentors.

Reading this morning's 'Times,' I find that Mr T. P. O'Connor used in the House of Commons the following words: "The Irish people have a loathing of the very name of conscription." I have no means of ascertaining how far this be true, but whether true or not, I know that if the Irish people could see this war as it really is, as the Germans have made it, there is scarcely a man throughout the length and breadth of Ireland who would not make any sacrifice in order that such horror should be avenged.

From three to half-past eight we had waited at Aschaffenburg subjected to a continuous round of insult, painfully cramped on the hard benches, and half frozen with the cold of a frosty January morning, so that it was a relief when the train at last moved on.

Our route now lay through the beautifully wooded hills of the Bavarian Highlands, and the countryside reminded me in many ways of Speyside. The air blowing from the spruce woods was most refreshing, and in spite of the cold we were glad to have the pale winter sunshine streaming in through the open windows.

Our train was now reduced to two coaches, which had been hitched on to a local country train, and so we advanced more slowly than ever, and stopped at the very smallest stations. We seemed at last to be getting away from the omnipresent German soldier, for the wild-looking country through which we were passing did not look as if there had ever been any inhabitants, and on the station platform an occasional soldier on leave was the only reminder of war that could be seen.

The sentries, perhaps relieved at being in their native wilds, became quite talkative, and we were soon on most friendly terms. As no breakfast was to be hoped for from any of the stations, we agreed to pool what provisions we could get together between us. I had nothing but half of my German sausage, the other men had some bread, and the sentries produced two bottles of cold coffee, so we were all able to make quite a good meal.

This surprising atmosphere of cordiality was marred by a visit of inspection. A very shabby *unterofficier* suddenly opened the door leading into the corridor, and proceeded to pour a volume of abuse on us all, finally settling upon me as being the only representative

of the enemy who seemed to understand what it was all about.

I did not indeed understand very much, but could gather that the substance of his complaints was that we were too comfortable! and should have been travelling in a truck! After this excited individual had passed away, I asked the sentries what all the discourse was about, and they said that the fellow enjoyed getting a chance to scold somebody, as he was constantly in trouble with his superior officer, and got more than the usual share of slanging that falls to the lot of the German soldier.

On leaving Aschaffenburg we had been definitely assured that our destination was Nuremburg, and for that reason, when at about 11 o'clock the train entered the picturesque valley of the river Main, on the bank of which the town of Würzburg is situated, I little thought that here was the end of our journey, and here was to be our future prison home.

Hardly had we drawn up at the station when it became obvious that our destination had been reached.

A number of Red Cross officials were on the platform, which was lined with stretchers. There was no time for more than a hurried farewell, but before leaving the carriage the young Irishman, whose name was Patrick Flynn, begged me to accept the only thing he had to give me as a souvenir, and pressed into my hand a Belgian five centime nickel coin, which I shall always keep in remembrance of the unselfish kindness with which these poor wounded soldiers treated me on our long and painful journey.

Printed by William Blackwood and Sons.

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCC. OCTOBER 1915. Vol. CXCVIII.

THE FIRST HUNDRED THOUSAND.

BY THE JUNIOR SUB.

XIX. THE TRIVIAL ROUND.

We have been occupying trenches, off and on, for a matter of two months, and have settled down to an unexhilarating but salutary routine. Each dawn we "stand to arms," and peer morosely over the parapet, watching the grey grass turn slowly to green, while snipers' bullets buzz over our heads. Each forenoon we cleanse our dew-rusted weapons, and build up with sandbags what the persevering Teuton has thrown down. Each afternoon we creep unostentatiously into subterranean burrows, while our respective gunners, from a safe position in the rear, indulge in what they humorously describe as "an artillery duel." The humour arises from the fact that they fire, not at one another, but at us. It is as if two big boys, having declared a vendetta, were to assuage their hatred and satisfy their honour by going out every afternoon and throwing stones at one another's little brothers. Each evening we go on sentry duty; or go out with patrols, or working parties, or ration parties. Our losses in killed and wounded are not heavy, but they are regular. We would not grudge the lives thus spent if only we could advance, even a little. But there is nothing doing. Sometimes a trench is rushed here, or recaptured there, but the net result is—stalemate.

The campaign upon which we find ourselves at present embarked offers few opportunities for brilliancy. One wonders how Napoleon would have handled it. His favourite device, we remember, was

to dash rapidly about the chess-board, insert himself between two hostile armies, and defeat them severally. But how can you insert yourself between two armies when you are faced by only one army — an army stretching from Ostend to the Alps?

One of the first elements of successful strategy is surprise. In the old days, a general of genius could outflank his foe by a forced march, or lay some ingenious trap or ambush. But how can you outflank a foe who has no flanks? How can you lay an ambush for the modern Intelligence Department, with its aeroplane reconnaissance and telephonic nervous system? Do you mass half a million men at a chosen point in the enemy's line? Straightway the enemy knows all about it, and does likewise. Each morning General Headquarters of each side finds upon its breakfast-table a concise summary of the movements of all hostile troops, the disposition of railway rolling-stock — yea, even aeroplane photographs of it all. What could Napoleon himself have done under the circumstances? One is inclined to suspect that that volcanic megalomaniac would have perished of spontaneous combustion of the brain.

However, trench life has its alleviations. There is The Day's Work, for instance. Each of us has his own particular "stunt," in which he takes that personal and rather egotistical pride which only increasing proficiency can bestow.

The happiest — or at least, the busiest — people just now are the "Specialists." If you are engaged in ordinary Company work, your energies are limited to keeping watch, dodging shells, and improving trenches. But if you are what is invidiously termed an "employed" man, life is full of variety.

Do you observe that young officer sitting on a ration-box at his dug-out door, with his head tied up in a bandage? That is Second Lieutenant Lochgair, whom I hope to make better known to you in time. He is a chieftain of high renown in his own inaccessible but extensive fastness; but out here, where every man stands on his own legs, and not his grandfather's, he is known simply as "Othello." This is due to the fact that Major Kemp once likened him to the earnest young actor of tradition, who blacked himself all over to ensure proficiency in the playing of that part. For he is above all things an enthusiast in his profession. Last night he volunteered to go out and "listen" for a suspected mine some fifty yards from the German trenches. He set out as soon as darkness fell, taking with him a biscuit-tin full of water. A circular from Headquarters — one of those circulars which no one but Othello would have treated with proper reverence — had suggested this device. The idea was that, since liquids convey sound better than air, the listener should place his tin of water on the ground,

lie down beside it, immerse one ear therein, and so draw secrets from the earth. Othello failed to locate the mine, but kept his head in the biscuit-tin long enough to contract a severe attack of earache.

But he is not discouraged. At present he is meditating a design for painting himself grass-green and climbing a tree—thence to take a comprehensive and unobserved survey of the enemy's dispositions. He will do it too, if he gets a chance!

The machine-gunners, also, contrive to chase monotony by methods of their own. Listen to Ayling, concocting his diurnal scheme of frightfulness with a colleague. Unrolled upon his knee is a large-scale map.

"I think we might touch up those cross-roads to-night," he says, laying the point of his dividers upon a spot situated some hundreds of yards in rear of the German trenches. "I expect they'll have lots of transport there about ration-time—eh?"

"Sound scheme," assents his coadjutor, a bloodthirsty stripling named Ainslie. "Got the bearings?"

"Hand me that protractor. Seventy-one, nineteen, true. That comes to"—Ayling performs a mental calculation—"almost exactly eighty-five, magnetic. We'll go out about nine, with two guns, to the corner of this dry ditch here—the range is two thousand five hundred, exactly"—

"Our lightning calculator!" murmurs his admiring colleague. "No elastic up the sleeve, or anything! All done by simple ledger-de-mang? Proceed!"

—"And loose off a belt or two. What say?"

"Application forwarded, and strongly recommended," announced Ainslie. He examined the map. "Cross-roads—eh? That means at least one estaminet. One estaminet, with Bosches inside, complete! Think of our little bullets all popping in through the open door, five hundred a minute! Think of the rush to crawl under the counter! It might be a Headquarters? We might get Von Kluck or Rupy of Bavaria, splitting a half litre together. We shall earn Military Crosses over this, my boy," concluded the imaginative youth. "Wow, wow!"

"The worst of indirect fire," mused the less gifted Ayling, "is that you never can tell whether you have hit your target or not. In fact, you can't even tell whether there was a target there to hit."

"Never mind; we'll chance it," replied Ainslie. "And if the Bosche artillery suddenly wakes up and begins retaliating on the wrong spot with whizz-bangs—well, we shall know we've tickled up *somebody*, anyhow! Nine o'clock, you say?"

Here, again, is a bombing party, prepared to steal out under cover of night. They are in charge of one Sinclair, recently promoted to Captain, supported by that hoary fire-eater, Sergeant Carfrae. The

party numbers seven all told, the only other member thereof with whom we are personally acquainted being Lance-Corporal M'Snape, the ex-Boy Scout. Every man wears a broad canvas belt full of pockets: each pocket contains a bomb.

Sinclair briefly outlines the situation. Our fire-trench here runs round the angle of an orchard, which brings it uncomfortably close to the Germans. The Germans are quite as uncomfortable about the fact as we are—some of us are rather inclined to overlook this important feature of the case—and they have run a sap out towards the nearest point of the Orchard Trench (so our aeroplane observers report), in order to supervise our movements more closely.

"It may only be a listening-post," explains Sinclair to his bombers, "with one or two men in it. On the other hand, they may be collecting a party to rush us. There are some big shell-craters there, and they may be using one of them as a saphead. Anyhow, our orders are to go out to-night and see. If we find the sap, with any Germans in it, we are to bomb them out of it, and break up the sap as far as possible. Advance, and follow me."

The party steals out. The night is very still, and a young and inexperienced moon is making a somewhat premature appearance behind the Bosche trenches. The ground is covered with weedy grass —disappointed hay — which makes silent progress a fairly simple matter. The bombers move forward in extended order searching for the saphead. Sinclair, in the centre, pauses occasionally to listen, and his well-drilled line pauses with him. Sergeant Carfrae crawls stertorously upon the left. Out on the right is young M'Snape, tingling.

They are half-way across now, and the moon is marking time behind a cloud.

Suddenly there steals to the ears of M'Snape — apparently from the recesses of the earth just in front of him—a deep, hollow sound, the sound of men talking in some cavernous space. He stops dead, and signals to his companions to do likewise. Then he listens again. Yes, he can distinctly hear guttural voices, and an occasional *clink, clink.* The saphead has been reached, and digging operations are in progress.

A whispered order comes down the line that M'Snape is to "investigate." He wriggles forward until his progress is arrested by a stunted bush. Very stealthily he rises to his knees and peers over. As he does so, a chance star-shell bursts squarely over him, and comes sizzling officiously down almost on to his back. His head drops like a stone into the bush, but not before the ghostly magnesium flare has shown him what he came out to see — a deep shell-crater. The crater is full of Germans. They look like grey beetles in a trap, and are busy with pick and shovel, apparently "improving" the crater and connecting

it with their own fire-trenches. They have no sentry out. *Dormitat Homerus.*

M'Snape worms his way back, and reports. Then, in accordance with an oft-rehearsed scheme, the bombing party forms itself into an arc of a circle at a radius of some twenty yards from the stunted bush. (Not the least of the arts of bomb-throwing is to keep out of range of your own bombs.) Every man's hand steals to his pocketed belt. Next moment Sinclair flings the first bomb. It flies fairly into the middle of the crater.

Half a dozen more go swirling after it. There is a shattering roar; a cloud of smoke; a muffled rush of feet; silence; some groans. Almost simultaneously the German trenches are in an uproar. A dozen star-shells leap to the sky; there is a hurried outburst of rifle fire; a machine-gun begins to patter out a stuttering malediction.

Meanwhile our friends, who have exhibited no pedantic anxiety to remain and behold the result of their labours, are lying upon their stomachs in a convenient fold in the ground, waiting patiently until such time as it shall be feasible to complete their homeward journey.

Half an hour later they do so, and roll one by one over the parapet into the trench. Casualties are slight. Private Nimmo has a bullet-wound in the calf of his leg; and Sergeant Carfrae, whom Nature does not permit to lie as flat as the others, will require some repairs to the pleats of his kilt.

"All present?" inquires Sinclair.

It is discovered that M'Snape has not returned. Anxious eyes peer over the parapet. The moon is stronger now, but it is barely possible to distinguish objects clearly for more than a few yards.

A star-shell bursts, and heads sink below the parapet. A German bullet passes overhead, with a sound exactly like the crack of a whip. Silence and comparative darkness return. The heads go up again.

"I'll give him five minutes more, and then go and look for him," says Sinclair. "Hallo!"

A small bush, growing just outside the barbed wire, rises suddenly to its feet; and, picking its way with incredible skill through the nearest opening, runs at full speed for the parapet. Next moment it tumbles over into the trench.

Willing hands extracted M'Snape from his arboreal envelope — he could probably have got home quite well without it, but once a Boy Scout, always a Boy Scout — and he made his report.

"I went back to have a look-see into the crater, sirr."

"Well?"

"It's fair blown in, sirr, and a good piece of the sap too. I tried could I find a prisoner to bring in"—our Colonel has promised a reward of fifty francs to the man who can

round up a whole live Bosche —"but there were nane. They had got their wounded away, I doubt."

"Never mind," says Sinclair. "Sergeant, see these men get some sleep now. Stand-to at two-thirty, as usual. I must go and pitch in a report, and I shall say you all did splendidly. Good-night!"

This morning, the official Intelligence Summary of our Division—published daily and known to the unregenerate as 'Comic Cuts'—announced, with solemn relish, among other items of news:—

Last night a small party bombed a suspected saphead at —here followed the exact bearings of the crater on the large-scale map. *Loud groans were heard, so it is probable that the bombs took effect.*

For the moment, life has nothing more to offer to our seven friends.

II.

As already noted, our enthusiasm for our own sphere of activity is not always shared by our colleagues. For instance, we in the trenches frequently find the artillery of both sides unduly obtrusive; and we are of opinion that in trench warfare artillery practice should be limited by mutual consent to twelve rounds per gun per day, fired by the gunners *at* the gunners. "Except, of course, when the Big Push comes." The Big Push is seldom absent from our thoughts these days.

"That," observed Captain Wagstaffe to Bobby Little, "would leave us foot-sloggers to settle our own differences. My opinion is that we should do so with much greater satisfaction to ourselves if we weren't constantly interfered with by coal-boxes and Black Marias."

"Still, you can't blame them for loosing off their big guns," contended the fair-minded Bobby. "It must be great sport."

"They tell me it's a greatly overrated amusement," replied Wagstaffe—"like posting an insulting letter to some one you dislike. You see, you aren't there when he opens it at breakfast next morning! The only man of them who gets any fun is the Forward Observing Officer. And he," concluded Wagstaffe in an unusual vein of pessimism, "does not live long enough to enjoy it!"

The grievances of the Infantry, however, are not limited to those supplied by the Royal Artillery. There are the machine-guns and the trench-mortars.

The machine-gunner is a more or less accepted nuisance by this time. He has his own emplacements in the line, but he never appears to use them. Instead, he adopts the peculiar expedient of removing his weapon from a snug and well-fortified position, and either

taking it away somewhere behind the trenches and firing salvoes over your head (which is reprehensible), or planting it upon the parapet in your particular preserve, and firing it from there (which is criminal). Machine-gun fire always provokes retaliation.

"Why in thunder can't you keep your filthy tea-kettle in its own place, instead of bringing it here to draw fire?" inquired Mr Cockerell, not altogether unreasonably, as Ayling and his satellites passed along the trench bearing the offending weapon, with water-jacket aboil, back to its official residence.

"It is all for your good, my little man," explained Ayling loftily. "It would never do to give away one's real gun positions. If we did, the Bosches would sit tight and say nothing at the time, but just make a note of the occurrence. Then, one fine morning, when they *really* meant business, they would begin by dropping a Black Maria on top of each emplacement; and where would you and your platoon be then, with an attack coming on and *us* out of action. So long!"

But the most unpopular man in the trenches is undoubtedly the Trench Mortar Officer. His apparatus consists of what looks like a section of rain-pipe, standing on legs. Upon its upturned muzzle is poised a bomb, having the appearance of a plum-pudding on a stick. This he discharges over the parapet into the German trenches, where it causes a comforting explosion. He then walks rapidly away.

For obvious reasons, it is not advisable to fire a trench-mortar too often—at any rate from the same place. But the whole weight of public opinion in our trench is directed against it being fired from anywhere at all. Behold the Trench Mortar Officer and his gang of pariahs creeping stealthily along in the lee of the parados, just as dawn breaks, in the section of trench occupied by No. 10 Platoon. For the moment they are unheeded, for the platoon are "standing-to," and the men are lined along the firing-step, with their backs to the conspirators.

On reaching a suitable spot, the mortar party proceed to erect their apparatus with as little ostentation as possible. But they are soon discovered. The platoon subaltern hurries up.

"Awfully sorry, old man," he says breathlessly, "but the C.O. gave particular orders that this part of the trench was on no account to be used for trench-mortar fire. You see, we are only about seventy yards from the Bosche trenches here——"

"I know," explains the T.M.O.; "that is why I came."

"But it is most important," continues the platoon commander, still quoting glibly from an entirely imaginary mandate of the C.O., "that no retaliatory shell fire should be attracted here. Most serious for the whole Brigade, if this bit of parapet got pushed over. Now, there's a topping place

about ten traverses away. You can lob them over from there beautifully. Come along."

And with fair words and honeyed phrases he elbows the dispirited band to a position—for his platoon—of comparative inoffensiveness.

The Trench Mortar Officer drifts on, and presently, with the uneasy assurance of the proprietor of a punch-and-judy show who has inadvertently strayed into Park Lane, attempts once more to give his unpopular entertainment. This time his shrift is even shorter, for he encounters Major Kemp — never at his sunniest in the small hours of the morning.

Field officers have no need to employ the language of diplomacy when dealing with subalterns.

"No, you *don't*, my lad!" announces the Major. "Not if I can help it! Take it away! Take your darned liver-pill out of this! Burn it! Bury it! Eat it! But not here! Creep away!"

The abashed procession complies. This time they find a section of trench in charge of a mere corporal. Here, before any one of sufficient standing can be summoned to deal with the situation, the Trench Mortar Officer seizes his opportunity, and discharges three bombs over the parapet. He then retires defiantly to his dug-out.

But it is an Ishmaelitish existence.

III.

So much for the alleviations which professional enthusiasm bestows. Now for a few alleviations proper. These are Sleep, Food, and Literature.

Sleep is the rarest of these. We seldom get more than a few hours at a time; but it is astonishing how readily one learns to slumber in unlikely surroundings — upon damp earth, in cramped positions, amid ceaseless noise, in clothes and boots that have not been removed for days. One also acquires the priceless faculty of losing no time in dropping off.

As for food, we grumble at times, just as people at home are grumbling at the Savoy, or Lockhart's. It is the Briton's habit so to do. But in moments of repletion we are fain to confess that the organisation of our commissariat is wonderful. Of course the quality of the *menu* varies, according to the immunity of the communication-trenches from shell fire, or the benevolence of the Quartermaster and the mysterious powers behind him, or the facilities for cooking offered by the time and place in which we find ourselves. No large fires are permitted: the smoke would give too good a ranging-mark to Minnie and her relatives. Still, it is surprising how quickly you can boil a canteen over a few chips. There is also, for those who can afford

half-a-crown, that invaluable contrivance, "Tommy's Cooker"; and occasionally we get a ration of coke. When times are bad, we live on bully, biscuit, cheese, and water, strongly impregnated with chloride of lime. The water is conveyed to us in petrol-tins—the old familiar friends, Shell and Pratt—hundreds of them. Motorists at home must be feeling the shortage. In normal times we can reckon on plenty of hot, strong tea; possibly some bread; probably an allowance of bacon and jam. And sometimes, when the ration parties arrive, mud-stained and weary, in the dead of night, and throw down their bursting sacks, our eyes feast upon such revelations as tinned butter, condensed milk, raisins, and a consignment of that great chieftain of the ration race, The Maconochie of Maconochie. On these occasions Private Mucklewame collects his share, retires to his kennel, and has a gala-day.

Thirdly, the blessings of literature. Our letters arrive at night, with the rations. The mail of our battalion alone amounts to eight or ten mail-bags a day; from which you may gather some faint idea of the labours of our Field Post Offices. There are letters, and parcels, and newspapers. Letters we may pass over. They are featureless things, except to their recipient. Parcels have more individuality. Ours are of all shapes and sizes, and most of them are astonishingly badly tied. It is quite heartrending to behold a kilted exile endeavouring to gather up a heterogeneous mess of socks, cigarettes, chocolate, soap, shortbread, and Edinburgh rock, from the ruins of what was once a flabby and unstable parcel, but is now a few skimpy rags of brown paper, which have long escaped the control of a most inadequate piece of string—a monument of maternal lavishness and feminine economy.

Then there are the newspapers. We read them right through, beginning at the advertisements and not skipping even the leading articles. Then, when we have finished, we frequently read them right through again. They serve three purposes. They give us information as to how the War is progressing—we get none here, the rank and file, that is; they serve to pass the time; and they afford us topics for conversation. For instance, they enable us to follow and discuss the trend of home politics. And in this connection, I think it is time you were introduced to Captain Achille Petitpois. (That is not his real name, but it is as near to it as most of us are likely to get.) He is one of that most efficient body, the French *liaison* officers, who act as connecting-link between the Allied Forces, and naturally is an accomplished linguist. He is an ardent admirer of British institutions, but is occasionally not a little puzzled by their complexity. So he very sensibly comes to people like Captain

Wagstaffe for enlightenment, and they enlighten him.

Behold Achille—a guest in A Company's billet—drinking whisky-and-sparklet out of an aluminium mug, and discussing the news of the day.

"And your people at home," he said, "you think they are taking the War seriously?" (Achille is addicted to reading the English newspapers without discrimination.)

"So seriously," replied Wagstaffe instantly, "that it has become necessary for the Government to take steps to cheer them up."

"Comment?" inquired Achille politely.

For answer Wagstaffe picked up a three-day-old London newspaper, and read aloud an extract from the Parliamentary report. The report dealt faithfully with the latest antics of the troupe of eccentric comedians which appears, (to us), since the formation of the Coalition Government, to have taken possession of the front Opposition Bench.

"Who are these assassins—these imbeciles—these *crétins*," inquired Petitpois, "who would endanger the ship of the State?" (Achille prides himself upon his knowledge of English idiom.)

"Nobody knows!" replied Wagstaffe solemnly. "They are children of mystery. Before the War, nobody had ever heard of them. They——"

"But they should be shot!" explained that free-born Republican, Petitpois.

"Not a bit, old son! That is where you fail to grasp the subtleties of British statesmanship. I tell you there are no flies on our Cabinet!"

"Flies?"

"Yes: *mouches*, you know. The agility of our Cabinet Ministers is such that these little insects find it impossible to alight upon them."

"Your Ministers are athletes—yes," agreed Achille comprehendingly. "But the——"

"Only intellectually. What I mean is that they are a very downy collection of old gentlemen—"

Achille, murmuring something hazy about "Downing Street," nodded his head.

"—And when they came into power, they knew as well as anything that after three weeks or so the country would begin to grouse——"

"Grouse? A sporting bird?" interpolated Achille.

"Exactly. They knew that the country would soon start giving them the bird——"

"What bird? The grouse?"

"Oh, dry up, Wagger!" interposed Blaikie. "He means, Petitpois, that the Government, knowing that the electorate would begin to grow impatient if the War did not immediately take a favourable turn——"

Achille smiled.

"I see now," he said. "Proceed Ouagstaffe, my old!"

"In other words," continued the officer so addressed, "the Government decided that if they gave the Opposition half a chance to get together, and find leaders, and consolidate their new trenches, they might turn them out."

"Bien," assented Achille. Every one was listening now, for Wagstaffe as a politician usually had something original to say.

"Well," proceeded Wagstaffe, "they saw that the great thing to do was to prevent the Opposition from making an impression on the country—from being taken too seriously, in fact. So what did they do? They said: 'Let's arrange for a *comic* Opposition—an Opposition *pour rire*, you know. They will make the country either laugh or cry. Anyhow, the country will be much too busy deciding which to do to have any time to worry about *us;* so we shall have a splendid chance to get on with the War.' So they sent down the Strand — that's where the Variety agents foregather, I believe—what you call *entrepreneurs*, Achille—and booked this troupe, complete, for the run of the War. They did the thing in style; spared no expense; and got a comic newspaper proprietor to write the troupe up, and themselves down. The scheme worked beautifully—what you would call a *succès fou*, Achille."

"I am desolated, my good Ouagstaffe," observed Petitpois after a pregnant silence; "but I cannot believe all you say."

"I *may* be wrong," admitted Wagstaffe handsomely, "but that's my reading of the situation. At any rate, Achille, you will admit that my theory squares with the known facts of the case."

Petitpois bowed politely.

"Perhaps it is I who am wrong, my dear Ouagger. There is such a difference of point of view between your politics and ours."

The deep voice of Captain Blaikie broke in.

"If Lancashire," he said grimly, "were occupied by a German army, as the Lille district is to-day, I fancy there would be a considerable levelling up of political points of view all round. No limelight for a comic opposition then, Achille, old son!"

IV.

Besides receiving letters, we write them. And this brings us to that mysterious and impalpable despot, the Censor.

There is not much mystery about him really. Like a good many other highly placed individuals, he deputes as much of his work as possible to some one else—in this case that long-suffering maid-of-all-work, the company officer. Let us track Bobby Little to his dug-out, during one of those numerous periods of enforced retirement which occur between the hours of three and six, "Pip Emma"—as our friends the "buzzers" call the afternoon. On the floor of this retreat (which looks like a dog-kennel and smells like a vault) he finds a small heap of letters, deposited there for purposes of what the platoon-sergeant calls

"censure." These have to be read (which is bad); licked up (which is far worse); signed on the outside by the officer, and forwarded to Headquarters. Here they are stamped with the familiar red triangle and forwarded to the Base, where they are supposed to be scrutinised by the real Censor —*i.e.*, the gentleman who is paid for the job — and are finally despatched to their destination.

Bobby, drawing his legs well inside the kennel, out of the way of stray shrapnel bullets, begins his task.

The heap resolves itself into three parts. First come the post-cards, which give no trouble, as their secrets are written plain for all to see. There are half a dozen or so of the British Army official issue, which are designed for the benefit of those who lack the epistolary gift — what would a woman say if you offered such things to her?— and bear upon the back the following printed statements :—

I am quite well.
I have been admitted to hospital.
I am sick / *wounded* { *and am going on well.* / *and hope to be discharged soon.*
I have received your { *letter, dated . . .* / *telegram, „* / *parcel, „*
Letter follows at first opportunity.
I have received no letter from you { *lately.* / *for a long time.*

(The gentleman who designed this post-card must have been a descendant of Sydney Smith. You remember that great man's criticism of the Books of Euclid? He preferred the Second Book, on the ground that it was more "impassioned" than the others!)

All the sender of this impassioned missive has to do is to delete such clauses as strike him as untruthful or over-demonstrative, and sign his name. He is not allowed to add any comments of his own. On this occasion, however, one indignant gentleman has pencilled the ironical phrase, "I don't think!" opposite the line which acknowledges the receipt of a parcel. Bobby lays this aside, to be returned to the sender.

Then come some French picture post-cards. Most of these present soldiers—soldiers posing, soldiers exchanging international handgrips, soldiers grouped round a massive and *décolletée* lady in flowing robes, and declaring that *La patrie sera libre!* Underneath this last, Private Ogg has written: "Dear Lizzie,—I hope this finds you well as it leaves me so. I send you a French p.c. The writing means long live the Queen of France."

The next heap consists of letters in official-looking green envelopes. These are already sealed up, and the sender has signed the following attesta-

tion, printed on the flap: *I certify on my honour that the contents of this envelope refer to nothing but private and family matters.* Setting aside a rather bulky epistle addressed to The Editor of a popular London weekly, which advertises a circulation of over a million copies—a singularly unsuitable recipient for correspondence of a private and family nature—Bobby turns to the third heap, and sets to work upon his daily task of detecting items of information, "which if intercepted or published might prove of value to the enemy."

It is not a pleasant task to pry into another person's correspondence, but Bobby's scruples are considerably abated by the consciousness that on this occasion he is doing so with the writer's full knowledge. Consequently it is a clear case of *caveat scriptor.* Not that Bobby's flock show any embarrassment at the prospect of his scrutiny. Most of them write with the utmost frankness, whether they are conducting a love affair, or are involved in a domestic broil of the most personal nature. In fact, they seem rather to enjoy having an official audience. Others cheerfully avail themselves of this opportunity of conveying advice or reproof to those above them, by means of what the Royal Artillery call "indirect fire." Private Dunshie remarks: "We have been getting no pay these three weeks, but I doubt the officer will know what has become of the money." It is the firm conviction of every private soldier in "Ki" that all fines and deductions go straight into the pocket of the officer who levies them. Private Hogg, always an optimist, opines: "The officers should know better how to treat us now, for they all get a read of our letters."

But, as recorded above, the outstanding feature of this correspondence is an engaging frankness. For instance, Private Cosh, who under an undemonstrative, not to say wooden, exterior evidently conceals a heart as inflammable as flannelette, is conducting single-handed no less than four parallel love affairs. One lady resides in his native Coatbridge, the second is in service in South Kensington, the third serves in a shop in Kelvinside, and the fourth moth appears to have been attracted to this most unlikely candle during our sojourn in winter billets in Hampshire. Cosh writes to them all most ardently every week—sometimes oftener—and Bobby Little, as he ploughs wearily through repeated demands for photographs, and touching protestations of life-long affection, curses the verbose and susceptible youth with all his heart.

But this mail brings him a gleam of comfort.

So you tell me, Chrissie, writes Cosh to the lady in South Kensington, *that you are engaged to be married on a milkman. . . .*

("Thank heaven!" murmurs Bobby piously.)

No, no, Chrissie, you need not

trouble yourself. It is nothing to me.

("He's as sick as muck!" comments Bobby.)

All I did before was in friendship's name.

("Liar!")

Bobby, thankfully realising that his daily labours will be materially lightened by the withdrawal of the fickle Chrissie from the postal arena, ploughs steadily through the letters. Most of them begin in accordance with some approved formula, such as—

It is with the greatest of pleasure that I take up my pen——

It is invariably a pencil, and a blunt one at that.

Crosses are ubiquitous, and the flap of the envelope usually bears the mystic formula, S.W.A.K. This apparently means "Sealed with a kiss," which, considering that the sealing is done not by the writer but by the Censor, seems to take a good deal for granted.

Most of the letters acknowledge the receipt of a "parcle"; many give a guarded summary of the military situation.

We are not allowed to tell you about the War, but I may say that we are now in the trenches. We are all in the pink, and not many of the boys has gotten a dose of lead-poisoning yet.

It is a pity that the names of places have to be left blank. Otherwise we should get some fine phonetic spelling. Our pronunciation is founded on no pedantic rules. Armentières is Armentears, Busnes is Business, Bailleul is Booloo, and Vieille Chapelle is Veal Chapel.

The chief difficulty of the writers appears to be to round off their letters gracefully. *Having no more to say, I will now draw to a close*, is the accepted formula. Private Burke, never a tactician, concludes a most ardent love-letter thus: "*Well, Kate, I will now close, as I have to write to another of the girls.*"

But to Private Mucklewame literary composition presents no difficulties. Here is a single example of his terse and masterly style:—

Dere wife, if you could make the next postal order a trifle stronger, I might get getting an egg to my tea.—Your loving husband, JAS. MUCKLEWAME, *No.* 74077.

But there are features of this multifarious correspondence over which one has no inclination to smile. There are wistful references to old days; tender inquiries after bairns and weans; assurances to anxious wives and mothers that the dangers of modern warfare are merely nominal. There is an almost entire absence of boasting or lying, and very little complaining. There is a general and obvious desire to allay anxiety. We are all "fine"; we are all "in the pink." "This is a grand life."

Listen to Lance-Corporal M'Snape: *Well, mother, I got your parcel, and the things was most welcome; but you must not send any more. I seen a shilling stamp on the parcel: that is too much for you to*

afford. How many officers take the trouble to examine the stamp on their parcels?

And there is a wealth of homely sentiment and honest affection which holds up its head without shame even in the presence of the Censor. One rather pathetic screed, beginning: *Well, wife, I doubt this will be a poor letter, for I canna get one of they green envelopes to-day, but I'll try my best*—Bobby Little sealed and signed without further scrutiny.

V.

One more picture, to close the record of our trivial round.

It is a dark, moist, and most unpleasant dawn. Captain Blaikie stands leaning against a traverse in the fire-trench, superintending the return of a party from picket-duty. They file in, sleepy and dishevelled, through an archway in the parapet, on their way to dug-outs and repose. The last man in the procession is Bobby Little, who has been in charge all night.

Our line here makes a sharp bend round the corner of an orchard, and for security's sake a second trench has been cut behind, making, as it were, the cross-bar of a capital A. The apex of the A is no health resort. Brother Bosche, as already explained, is only fifty yards away, and his trench-mortars make excellent practice with the parapet. So the Orchard Trench is only occupied at night, and the alternative route, which is well constructed and comparatively safe, is used by all careful persons who desire to proceed from one arm of the A to the other.

The present party are the night picket, thankfully relinquishing their vigil round the apex.

Bobby Little remained to bid his company-commander good-morning, at the junction of the two trenches.

"Any casualties?" An invariable question at this spot.

"No, sir. We were lucky. There was a lot of sniping."

"It's a rum profession," mused Captain Blaikie, who was in a wakeful mood.

"In what way, sir?" inquired the sleepy but respectful Bobby.

"Well"—Captain Blaikie began to fill his pipe—"who takes about nine-tenths of the risk, and does practically all the hard work in the Army? The private and the subaltern—you and your picket, in fact. Now, here is the problem which has puzzled me ever since I joined the Army, and I've had nineteen years' service. The farther away you remove the British soldier from the risk of personal injury, the higher you pay him. Out here, a private of the line gets about a shilling a-day. For that he digs, saps, marches, and fights like a hero. The motor-transport driver gets six shillings a-day, no danger, and lives like

a fighting cock. The Army Service Corps drive about in motors, pinch our rations, and draw princely incomes. Staff Officers are compensated for their comparative security by extra cash, and first chop at the war medals. Now—why?"

"I dare say they would sooner be here, in the trenches, with us," was Bobby's characteristic reply.

Blaikie lit his pipe—it was almost broad daylight now—and considered.

"Yes," he agreed—"perhaps. Still, my son, I can't say I have ever noticed Staff Officers crowding into the trenches (as they have a perfect right to do) at four o'clock in the morning. And I can't say I altogether blame them. In fact, if ever I do meet one performing such a feat, I shall say: 'There goes a sahib—and a soldier!' and I shall take off my hat to him."

"Well, get ready now," said Bobby. "Look!"

They were still standing at the trench-junction. Two figures, in the uniform of the Staff, were visible in Orchard Trench, working their way down from the apex—picking their steps amid the tumbled sandbags, and stooping low to avoid gaps in the ruined parapet. The sun was just rising behind the German trenches. One of the officers was burly and middle-aged; he did not appear to enjoy bending double. His companion was slight, fair-haired, and looked incredibly young. Once or twice he glanced over his shoulder, and smiled encouragingly at his senior.

The pair emerged through the archway into the main trench, and straightened their backs with obvious relief. The younger officer—he was a lieutenant—noticed Captain Blaikie, saluted him gravely, and turned to follow his companion.

Captain Blaikie did not take his hat off, as he had promised. Instead, he stood suddenly to attention, and saluted in return, keeping his hand uplifted until the slim, childish figure had disappeared round the corner of a traverse.

It was the Prince of Wales.

(To be continued.)

"CONTRABAND."

I.

THOSE who have descended from the shrine under the grassy broom-clad peak of Monte Boglia over the Lake of Lugano, will possibly have certain painful recollections of the road by which they reached the lake 2000 feet below. It is a cobbled mule road, striding in giant zigzags down the precipitous hillside. When you have reached the bottom it will certainly occur to you that the words "cobble" and "hobble" don't rhyme for nothing.

I was rather more than halfway down when I slipped and sprained my ankle. The nearest houses were hundreds of feet below me. Experiments with my boot off showed that it was not a twist but a veritable sprain. There was no one about, and the hour being just after midday, I knew that there would be nobody about for some time, for slumber falls on the land between 12 o'clock and 3 P.M. Furthermore, I knew only a few phrases in Italian, and nobody ever understood them, nor had they the remotest bearing on sprained ankles.

It was clearly, therefore, a case of placing oneself unreservedly in the hands of Fate. Henceforth it was up to Fate to make all arrangements for seeing me down the hill, and transporting me across the lake and up to my hotel on the farther side. I was, however, prepared for a longish wait, and I had one. The bells of the village of Albogasio below me kept me abreast of the times. A covey, or choir, of nightingales was holding a choral festival near by. One, two, and three o'clock struck: it was time Fate began to do something. Five minutes later a child came pattering up the cobbles on his pattens, and seeing a drunken barefooted tramp recumbent in the gutter, fled and appeared no more. A little later a man with a scythe descended on me. On him I smiled engagingly, pointing to my discoloured limb, and wondering whether Fate meant to double me up and convey me down in the long wicker creel he carried on his back. This person may have been the village idiot, for he passed without taking the smallest notice of me. Or he may have been of that class who are determined never to meddle with what does not concern them, even a foreign gentleman taking his ease on cobble-stones, with an engaging smile on and one boot off. I was again left in solitude. What was evidently the 3.30 P.M. steamer clumped past far below me and died away in the distance, short of one passenger, and that myself.

The nightingales had, to my relief, given over, and a blackbird was doing a little chanting to the drone of insects. At last the key to the situation began

to turn. Down the hill behind me came an active footstep, and its owner took in the situation with commendable promptness. He saw I was an Englishman, and therefore must have brandy: and, barely passing the time of day, he scurried away down the hill. Within an hour he was back with this infallible remedy, which still holds its own with the people of our Island, despite the fulminations of the Faculty against it. This excellent stranger spoke English tolerably well. He was a keen, hard-looking, brown young man, prompt, gentle, and of few words. During his dash after stimulant he had arranged for a couple of men to bring up a sort of wooden stretcher used for carrying heavy loads up these roads, and on this I was carried down to an Albergo on the lake, and placed in the shade of a wistaria-covered bower, here to await the arrival of the 6 o'clock boat. Pending her arrival, oil and wine, in the form of some icy-cold Asti Spumanti, were poured into my wounded self by the Good Samaritan, who eventually saw me on board, and while conversing with the Captain concerning my further transportation, was nearly carried away himself. I parted from him with genuine regret, for he had done his duty by me with a charm of friendliness that I shall not readily forget.

II.

For quite a number of years now Henrietta and I have frequented the Bella Vista Hotel. I could not travel without Henrietta, for she is always certain about things and I never am. As she says herself, "It is much better to be sure you're right, and sometimes wrong, than to be like you, Richard, who are never certain of anything and very seldom right." So Henrietta does all the deciding, and she fixed on the Bella Vista partly because of its water supply, and partly because of the view of the snows. She is, and always was, a very nice blend of the material and the artistic. "To think," she said, "that these glorious snows should eventually find their way to the private artisan well of this hotel, and so into our tumblers at table!" "Why, you might almost say that we not only see the snows, but drink them!" I remember attempting a little pleasantry about Henrietta's rendering of the artesian well. But she is not one to poke fun at. It was three weeks after the accident to my ankle, when I was about again, that my sister and I started one fine June morning to take the funicular railway to the lake and so to Lugano. Before entering the sky-blue down-by-the-bows car, Henrietta made her usual careful examination of the steel cable, and pronounced that it would see us through this trip. She then entered our pew and

closed her eyes, and presently, after some ringing of bells, we "stooped" the 2000 feet to the lake, like a great blue bird, but in more sober fashion. A short wait, and then the steamer. A full boat to-day — probably a *festa*. Indeed the constant ringing of church bells along the lake shore said as much. Our decks were redolent of their cargo—vegetables, strawberries, cherries, fish. If there is one thing that Henrietta prides herself on, it is in not being the least insular. That is possibly why, after envisaging our very cosmopolitan fellow-travellers, she dropped her lorgnette and said with just a hint of a sniff, "And not an Englishman amongst them." But at that moment a most unmistakable Briton dashed out of the ticket office, and taking a pipe from his mouth hailed the steamer with "Hold on a moment!" Now, no lake steamer holds on for anybody; but our countryman managed to clamber on board just as the gangway came in, and away we glided towards Gandria, our next port.

There are many worse things than a short voyage on one of these lake steamers in early summer, when every prospect pleases, and, unless you be in very captious humour, man is interesting rather than vile. For standing and sitting among the market baskets are representatives of many countries in Europe. Perhaps I shall not be the first to note that he of Germany bulks largest, in both senses of the word, here as everywhere else nowadays. Usually a quiet, serious person, peering at things and not forgetting them. A thought, perhaps, on the fleshy side, and wearing a white baby collar outside his Norfolk jacket. He has serviceable legs, a little lacking in outline, owing to nether garments worn inside his ungartered and drooping stockings; and the knee-buttons of his breeches wander deviously up and about his chubby knees. He is generally hatless, and carries a rüksak; so does his female companion, who is most unbeautifully sunscorched to the very eyelids. There is nothing beautiful whatever about him or her, but there is a bullet-headed purposefulness in his appearance. He is out to use his legs, no matter what their shape, and to enjoy the open air, and plenty of beer with it, and he has gotten a very flat back in the service of the Fatherland. In short, there is an air of homeliness and wholesomeness about him that pleases us well, and compares well with the creaselessness and glossiness of the rest of holiday-making Europe that stands about him.

III.

Henrietta had closed her eyes in the funicular partly from want of faith in the steel cable, but chiefly because I

was hearing her conjugate the verb "to cook" in Italian. Long ago she had decided on our learning Italian; so we had made a point of doing half an hour a week while abroad. In this way we had put in ten hours Italian in the course of eight years, and had reached and remained at the verb "to cook." During these half hours I had always to call my sister "Enrichetta," while to her, of course, I was "Riccardo." This was supposed to invest the lesson with an Italian "atmosphere."

"Resume, Riccardo," said Enrichetta as soon as we were seated on the steamer. I plunged into the turgid intricacies of this loathsome verb, while my sister corrected me, and at the same time summed up the Englishman who had so nearly lost the boat. Thus, between "I might" and "thou might'st," she noted that the tobacco he smoked was good; between "he" and "we might have" she touched lightly on the fact that he combined decent linen with flagrant tweeds, while the soundness of his boots and his clean, hard appearance mingled distressingly with the rest of the plural. I ended. Henrietta continued, "You did that very badly, Riccardo, and must start again. I always think that Englishmen compare so very well with——" But at this point we bumped up against the wooden posts at Gandria, standing on grey-stone arcades, and festooning itself impartially with pink geraniums and strings of drying fish. The old woman, who is here piermaster, went through her usual performance of lassoing herself with our mooring-rope before she had made us fast. No passengers here, and no sooner were we under way again than Henrietta rallied me to my task. I always allow myself three or four swallows before starting on "I might have cooked": it gives me time to think, and Henrietta can't stop a fellow swallowing. I had just got to the second swallow when a short, sharp, and angry exclamation cut the lesson short and drew our attention to the quarter whence it came. The Customs official had been going his rounds and was now halted by the Englishman, and appeared to be passing his hands over the Englishman's execrably old Norfolk jacket. The latter had jumped to his feet, and the official was eyeing him in a very official manner, as if he had every intention of eventually passing his hands down to and unlacing and examining his boots.

When the fat is about to fall into the fire, I am by nature averse to being near by. So I was just about to toddle unobtrusively off to have a look at the engines, which invariably make me sea-sick, when Henrietta hissed in my ear, "Richard, he is an Englishman! You must stand by him." "Carissima Enrichetta," I essayed waggishly, "he may cook,"—meaning, of course, that the Englishman might stew in his own juice. But I was a beaten man. My sister's eye had be-

gun to flash, and when that happened it was generally as well to concur. Still, on the whole, "he may cook" was rather neat, and not at all a "laboured joke," which was what Henrietta called it later. It showed at least that I was perfectly collected.

"Richard, I insist."

"Certainly, my dear," I replied, abandoning the engines.

"And, Richard, take your umbrella," said Henrietta, thrusting my large white-cotton umbrella into my hand; and armed with this I most unwillingly approached the fire into which the fat had now fallen. Officialdom of the grossest and most uniformed kinds had insisted on that. Officialdom liked rows and scenes, and knew that other people usually disliked them. Officialdom, scenting triumph for its little self and humiliations for the other party, beckoned to two underlings. These, approaching and receiving orders, appeared to be about to lay hands on the suspect. For an Englishman, the latter dealt with one of those twain in rather an unusual manner. Turning sideways to him, he dealt him so woundy a blow with his suddenly swept back elbow, that the man was sent staggering across the deck and sat heavily into a strawberry basket. In short, there was a very pretty scene. A crowd had not even to collect; it was there already; and several of it had already screamed, while others had exclaimed, "Oh, la! la!" But the steamer, guided by a sphinx-like pilot, thrust her way through the lake and was nearing Lugano Central Pier. As we drew into this the situation was somewhat as follows. The stricken Customs man had arisen and was lost to all sense of his duty but that of removing "fraises écrasées" from that portion of his sky-blue pants which had impinged so violently on this luscious fruit. No doubt he was fully prepared to carry out further orders "à l'outrance," but, come to think of it, even the most obedient must first do his duty by trouserings of such a colour when they are covered with strawberry jam. The official who had begun it all was making notes with a gusto positively immense in a pocket-book of weighty mien. The other underling was bawling for dear life, shorewards, probably for reinforcements. And at this moment we arrived and were made fast.

The suspect now asked me if I was any good at Italian. I could not go into long explanations of the excellence of the half hour a week system, and the verb "to cook," so I said "No," but that I had some command of French. "Oh, I daresay that will pass here," he said, and asked me to be so kind as tell "that monkey" that he desired his company at once, if not sooner, to the very highest Customs official in the place, and that we should see what we should see when we got there. I communicated this in an expurgated form, and the official, after making one last and assuredly damning

entry in his book of doom, withdrew himself from its pages and intimated agreement. We passed over the gangway into quite a nice crowd which had gathered in answer to the bawlings aforementioned. In spite of a detached air that I assumed, many of the onlookers appeared to see in myself a leading actor in the scene. The melancholy cortége having been formed on shore, Henrietta having somehow hustled me into the head of it and then left me, we wended our way across the square, through some gloomy portals, and eventually into the presence of some one very awful, wearing a sword, and clattering it a great deal more than necessary.

As we entered, my companion said: "Jump in with the first word, or that monkey will get to windward of us with a pack of lies." I rather resented the word "us." But I presented my card, which produced very little effect, and my companion his, which produced a good deal. I could not catch the name on it, but I could see there was a handle before it and a spout —possibly M.P.—after it. The high official visibly warmed towards us. The room was cleared and we were begged to sit. Apologies followed, then explanations. The authorities were being worried by a peculiar phase of smuggling, behind which were both brains and money; hence redoubled vigilance on the part of all Customs officials; hence the regrettable incident caused by a blundering subordinate who would live to regret it. There was some more to the same effect and then we were bowed out. I thought myself that, considering all things, we had come out of it rather well.

We joined Henrietta outside, and after some courteous expressions on the part of the Englishman, who however did not give us his name, he went his way and we ours.

Henrietta during the rest of the day said nothing to me either in the way of praise or of blame. I felt that if I had only managed to give somebody a good knock with my umbrella I should have come out of it better.

We spent the day in embarking and disembarking, entraining and detraining, rack-and-pinioning up one mountain, and funicularing down another; in short, in availing ourselves of every means of progress but that of our legs. This is called an "Expedition," and the hotel does up lunch for you in a stiff green paper bag and makes no extra charge, and all in a country where the manifold beauties could never be properly absorbed save in leisurely fashion, and where at midday, when a too ardent sun counsels a halt, you may turn aside into the "Grotto" this or the "Grotto" that, and in the dense shade of beech or vine-pleached alleys, eat your bread and cheese and sip your ice-cold wine at an immemorial table of grey stone, and to the song of nightingales.

IV.

It was the third day of continual rain and cloud. Occasionally the sharper crags above San Mamette had rent their way through the swirling mists and frowned out, black with moisture, upon us for an hour or so. Then they became enswaddled in cloud and disappeared.

It was after "le lunch." The Powers (Great Britain remaining in splendid isolation and saying she would be asphyxiated) had agreed to shut all doors and windows, and our heating apparatus was in full blast. We were all a little torpid, barring a party of noisy, joyous, bean-fed Jews. The dank woods and meadows had furnished no floral tributes to lay at the feet of our long-suffering and completely knowledgeable Professor for diagnosis. It was Miss Violet Trifler ("But please call me Posey") who had used the expression "floral tribute." Nothing ever kept her in, and she had brought in three damp weedy things and laid them before the Professor. This she had done simply to curry favour with him, and as a follower of a vogue, not as an earnest seeker after knowledge. The great and good man would have no trifling, and dismissed the flowers as being respectively a parasite, a poor specimen of something diagnosed a week previous, and a weed. Miss Trifler, however, waltzed—she seldom walked, and always said she preferred rolling to walking down hills—across the hall and inducted her tributes into her Odol tumbler — the hotel allowed us each one for flowers. This immediately fell over, but Miss Trifler let it be and Tyrolese-stepped towards the drawing-room, where she was seized by our earnest worker amongst tuberculous London firemen and given a tract to keep her quiet. The Professor was heard to murmur under his breath, "Volatile, not Violet, Trifler."

Only certain birds of certain feathers frequent the Bella Vista: they are of a certain age. Henrietta, for instance, is usually the baby, and she is forty. Other birds of the wrong sort of feathers are resented. They are not pecked out of the hotel, but telepathic influences and suggestion are subtly brought to bear on them, and they vanish. Thus, the Jews aforementioned were soon telepathized away. And thus the position in our midst of the earnest worker among tuberculous firemen was precarious, not because of her mission, but owing to her fondness for giving to everybody, regardless of age, sex, or nationality, tracts bearing on her own particular views of her own particular religious leanings. We have our little cliques, or what we prefer to call sections: thus there is the "Flower" section, and the "Expeditionizing" section, the former reading Botany books, and the latter 'Baedeker,' their waking hours

a nightmare of making hair-breadth steamer and train connections, and their sleeping hours of losing them. Then there is the section that never does anything whatever between meals, and at meals tucks its napkin into its chest and does a great deal. This section gives wonderful performances with its knife and green peas. Then there is the what-sort-of-tips-do-you-give section. Included in this are two dear old German ladies who have asked the question so often and got so many answers that they now tip every one every week. These two old dears, by the bye, are quite two of the top boys of the Professor's flower class. If they can't remember the Latin name for a flower, they say it is good for the stomach, or a good appetiser, or must be held in the beer for just ten minutes, no longer, so that the taste is not spoilt. Thus they go up top every time. We also permit a small sub-section of valetudinarians, provided they are of the fairly tame kind and not incurables. By these we do our duty and are thoroughly unsympathetic and very brisk with them. May we add, at some slight risk of being coarse, the section that brings a certain portion of its person (Henrietta calls it "their dia-frame," but I think she has the spelling wrong) to the Bella Vista as if it were a separate entity, like a pet dog or an ailing child. It is taken out early for a little walk in the morning, and then fed, and later sat with in the sun to give It appetite. At the mid-day meal It frequently gets too much solid food, and wine that It were far better without. Certainly It makes Its owner's face to shine, but this does not matter so much, for after lunch It is immediately taken away and relieved of any wrappings that might affect Its easement, and put to bed for the best part of the afternoon. Later, It is walked about with, very slowly, so as to tone It up for Its dinner, and after that It is given a liqueur and coffee, and falls into a chair and from that into a torpor. But the lift wafts It up very soon to bed. Above all things It must not be taken into draughts, but since It must be kept in good tone It must have Its little airing, even in light rain. But then It is swathed in an unbeautiful Reach-me-down, sometimes called a "MacFarlane." Its owners, I may add, are not so squeamish about naming It as I am. They call It by Its proper name, which is one of two syllables in English, three in French and Italian. In German I feel sure it must have a pet name, for It is cherished above all by Germans. But to return to that wet afternoon. We were roused from our lethargies by the sudden scrunching of wheels heard without. Our omnibus draws up at the door. There are trunks on its roof and water cascading from its every pore. Miss Trifler, dancing in through one door to see what's up, collides with Madame Bienmise, robed in Royal Tartan of silk,

who is rustling through another door for the same purpose. Miss Trifler says "Sorry": Madame is understood to murmur "Maladroite." Bells clang, manager, waiters, porter, scurry across the hall; doors bang, lifts rumble. Net result, two persons. Tall, grey, elderly lady, aspect somewhat severe: medium, pink, youngish gentleman, appearance somewhat clerical. Probably mother and son. Then the lift swallows them and they vanish. There follows a slight argument between Henrietta and our valetudinarian Miss Goodfellow, the former maintaining that the man is certainly a clergyman, aged about thirty, the latter that he is an Eton boy, aged about seventeen. Both base their arguments on the fact that he wears a white tie. Henrietta is proved to be right when the names of the new arrivals go up on the board as "Mrs & The Reverend R. Brown, London." Had there been any further doubt, the way in which the Reverend Brown handles the teapot at tea, and walks along passages as if they were tesselated aisles, and grips surplices when mounting stairs, would in the opinion of all competent judges have quite dispelled it. His "Good morning" is a benediction, and when he has found his legs, he develops a habit of herding timid ladies in an empty drawing-room and of addressing them in a parochial, some even went so far as to say, a pulpit voice, on matters of Higher Import. Nevertheless Admiral Truefit spoke truth when he said that although "these fellows" should be brought to their bearings by a year's residence in a gun-room or a ward-room or a fo'c'sle (I forget which), the Reverend Brown turned out quite a good fellow. Henrietta took up with the tall grey lady, whom she pronounced eminently lady-like, and remotely connected with a prelate in a sub-Continent. The parson and I used to walk together, and we shared one thing in common. We were both utterly uninterested in flowers, and absolutely determined not to know anything about them, or to sit at the feet of the Professor. We should have liked to have established a school, or a cult, or a vogue of our own, and had people, especially nice, earnest, not ill-looking girls, sitting round our feet. And as Brown knew not one word of the language, and I knew quite forty-four, he admired me tremendously, and used to make me ask questions of the "natives," as he called them, probably because of his remote connection in the Continent aforementioned, and he always used to say what an extraordinarily good accent I seemed to speak with. One doesn't work for ten years at a language for nothing. He wasn't at all parsonish, smoked quite good cigars, and pleased the Admiral tremendously by taking three fingers of whisky to the Admiral's two, before turning in at night.

Henrietta found the tall, grey lady, as I have said,

lady-like, but not very interesting. Perhaps a parish in the south of London, where she lived with her son, does not give one much to talk about. But if Henrietta can't talk people into admissions of common acquaintances, and of having been to the same places on nearly the same dates, and if in consequence Henrietta is denied the supreme joy of saying what a small place the world is, then she says these people are dull.

V.

Those who know the Bella Vista will remember that it stands just one hundred yards out of Switzerland, and the same distance inside of Italy, that the frontier line makes a sharp bend from due north and south to due east and west within the hotel grounds, and that therefore a stroller in those grounds will meet the frontier in two directions. In the map the frontier is marked by a line of innocuous little crosses, but these must not be taken too literally, for they represent a fifteen-feet-high wire net, hung with bells on "C" springs, and strongly guarded by the Italian preventive service, acting only on the Italian side of the net. That is to say, the contraband business is only a one-sided one, namely, from Switzerland to Italy.

The Bella Vista stands on a little plat of land, delved out of the mountain-side, and the ground from its terrace falls pretty sheer 2000 feet to the lake. This hillside is densely copsed, and the frontier line is a six-feet way, for the most part cut into steps, cleared and cut right through the bushes. Down this cutting runs the net, right into the lake below, where it hands over its preventive duties to two torpedo-boats, strictly nocturnal in habit, and several fixed search-lights on either shore of the lake.

Having crossed the lake, the frontier takes to the hills again and disappears over the eastern shoulder of Monte Boglia, beyond which we need not follow it. If you lay a hand on the net the bells ring, and smart, little uniformed men with rifles will appear and look at you. They are said to shoot you in the legs sometimes, but visitors will find them quite kind and civil. Every road and path leading from the net is picketed, so that the defence line has not only length, but depth. Thus on all the shady paths, and even the main drive of the hotel, are guardians, single or in pairs, looking bored to distraction, and smoking cigarettes under large umbrellas when it rains. The woods will also show a dozen old bivouac places; and a very early stroller will find pairs of rosy-cheeked young guards, snugly tucked into excellent valises, lying out in all sorts of unexpected places. They will

usually recognise such a stroller as a harmless idiot, but will be perfectly charmed if he gives them a couple of thin black cigars called Tuscanas.

The temptation to think that it must be pleasant to sleep out under cover of laburnum-trees and on beds of martagon and other lilies will immediately vanish if you go and do it yourself on a really wet night. Henrietta always calls it the poachers' net—poaching and the contraband business being much the same thing in her opinion.

Those who know the Bella Vista will also remember the peculiar acoustic properties of the hotel and its terrace, and how a word whispered at an upper window of the hotel can be heard on the terrace, and how the hotel orchestra can be heard a very long way below the terrace.

Parson Brown and I had walked together for a week or so, and then Henrietta said that I was overdoing it, and had better stop; after which, except at night, I saw very little of him. And often he did not come back till long after we had dined. He seemed to be always walking.

VI.

It was immediately after dinner, and we were all seated in the hall. The nimble toothpick of every nation but Great Britain flickered meditatively —only a toothpick can do that —on every side. A band of artists, who had arrived that afternoon as ordinary Italians, had transformed themselves into Neapolitan fisher-folk, and were performing on stringed instruments for our delectation. The male artists wore crimson satin shirts, green sashes, and striped pants. The females wore short skirts, velvet bodices with black velvet braces, and green stockings. Occasionally one of them sang, always with appropriate gestures, with a caper or two thrown in for luck. After the bag had come round twice, opinion began to waver as to whether enough was not rather better than a feast. Miss Goodfellow, our valetudinarian, said to Mr James Spooner, the henpecked man, that she felt she was a little pale. Mr Spooner said "Quite"; on which Miss Goodfellow, whom the least sympathy encouraged, said that the music had jarred her spinal column, and had made her left hip very painful. Mr Spooner said "Certainly," and began to wish he had not broken away from Mrs Spooner, who had remained in the drawing-room. Miss Goodfellow then ordered chocolate, and resumed the (hotel) Continental edition of the 'Daily Mail'; she had come out from dinner early to get it, and it had remained unread on her lap all the evening. The Admiral, hearing the chocolate ordered, said he was feeling pale and

ordered a whisky and hot water. At this moment Mrs Spooner sailed in and spoke. "James — Bed!" The pot-valiant James replied in an ill-assumed off-hand manner, that he'd be "along in about half an hour." Now this was foolish of James. We had all seen James at dinner consume a whole quarter-flask of vin-ordinaire, disguised in a rush-covered bottle and under a label of "Chianti Vecchio." We all knew it would be bad for James. The band had ceased and there followed a terrific silence, Deep calling to Deep, Will combating Will, and nothing heard but the snapping of Mrs Spooner's eyes. It takes but little to relieve a solemn moment, and we felt really grateful to a member of the expedition section, who said that you might have knocked him down with a pickaxe. "No, I did *not* mean toothpick, Maria," he snapped at a too literal wife. But when we all laughed (James, of course, had given best and gone), not because we thought the man funny, but because he had relieved a frightful tension; he rather forgot himself and no one laughed at all when he said, "Now I'm going to make another sally, even sallier than the last. I really thought every moment was going to be poor Spooner's next. Now, Maria, I said 'next,' and I meant 'next.' So you keep quiet and think over it, and it will all come to you in time." But as I have said, no one laughed at this, for we don't go in for being waggish at the Bella Vista. Miss Goodfellow, having lost the sympathetic James, said to the literal lady that if this sort of thing went on, she would suffer a complete break-up. "'Down,' my dear Miss Goodfellow, surely 'down,' not 'up'; my husband always talks of a 'break-down.'" Miss Goodfellow replied with a laugh, with about as much mirth in it as the creaking of the door of a condemned cell, that she had suffered a break-down exactly five years and two weeks ago. "What I live to avoid now is a 'break-up,' but I fear it is not far off." Tall grey lady sat by the open door and held it against all foreign combinations. She was knitting steadily, and appeared to be awaiting her son, who was out on one of his little expeditions. It was early June still, and a mighty cold wind blowing outside; and into this wind and on to the terrace I must ask you to step.

There is a bright moon shining somewhere behind, for although we and all our slope of the hill are in shadow, yet the farther shore of the lake and the villages on it, and the grey crags above the villages, are all bathed in moonlight, and the great space between ourselves and the mountain opposite is full of a weird misty radiance. The wind blusters and roars, yet there is never a cloud in the sky, and the lights of Lugano and those round the curving base of Monte Bré glitter and twinkle as if it were a still frosty night. The pollarded limes under which we stand, and in which are fixed

the arc lights that can be seen at Lugano, wag their stumpy heads about in the harder gusts and make a weird play of shadows. During a lull in the gale the shadows cease their dancing, and the faint song of a nightingale comes up from far below.

A few hundred feet below us the net speaks to the harder gusts, and in answer to the tinkling of the bells, now here and now there, a guard comes out of a straw hut, has a look round, and goes in again. The searchlights far below us keep prying and poking in and out amongst the dark corners of the lake.

A better night could scarcely have been chosen for the grand coup, the great run of contraband, now in the last stage of its process scarce one hundred yards below us. A black night would have been better in some ways, so would rain, but the wind and the cry of wolf from those little highly-strung bells are the great essentials.

VII.

Emilio and Giuseppi, youthful and rosy-cheeked "Guardians of Finance," had come on duty at five o'clock that afternoon, and were preparing to get through a draughty night as well as might be on a section of the frontier line immediately below the hotel. Emilio was taking his ease on a bed of twigs in one of the huts. He was reading a magazine by the light of a candle stuck inside his inverted hat, and smoking a cigarette. Light was bad, magazine worse, cigarette worst; but as all three were against orders, they were of a kin with stolen apples. Giuseppi kept cave seated at the door, and Giuseppi's dog, egregiously mottled and with a twitching nostril, kept cave too, seated on the butt of his master's rifle—hard, but drier than the ground.

"Music up yonder," says Emilio in good broad Tuscan, alluding to the efforts of the Neapolitan fisher-folk in the hotel hall, which were plainly audible down here.

"Ay," says Giuseppi, "they arrived this afternoon from Argegno: five of them in a one-horsed affair. Romans, I judge. One of them a pretty girl. Eyes like the lake, hair like—(Here, spotted one, shut thy ugly mouth! 'tis only the wind in the net)—hair like the golden broom over yonder on Boglia." "And they were speaking eyes, my Giuseppi, and they told you how long they were going to stay." Giuseppi replies that there was to be a three-day engagement at the hotel.

Here a bell tinkled so sharply that the speaker, cursing the wind, gets to his feet. Here he has a view of the lake right below him.

"Something up on the lake," he says sharply, and his companion rolls off his

bed and joins him outside the hut.

The searchlight beams have ceased their aimless wanderings and gropings; they are all met in one dark recess of the lake; a torpedo-boat is bustling up to join in.

Emilio says that after the disappointment over the fireworks some other excitement is only due to them. His companion remarks that Gandria church has just chimed nine o'clock, the very hour the fireworks were to have begun; and after ten minutes Emilio says, "Well, this wind cuts through a fellow. I'm going to turn in; keep a good look-out."

Giuseppi continues to watch the lights; but as he can make nothing of them, he is about to re-enter the hut when the sound of a full soprano voice singing a Neapolitan canzonetta came floating down to him in a most alluring fashion. Giuseppi alters his intention: decides to pop up the few hundred yards that lie between him and the hotel terrace, climb the railings, and have another look at the lake-like eyes and broom-like hair. He knows they will be plainly visible in the brilliantly lighted hall. So away he stumps up the steep steps, his dog whining with excitement.

VIII.

At a spot about two hundred yards above the two speakers in the hut, a shadow with rather more body to it than that in which it rested lay across the cleared cutting and on the Swiss side of the net. The shadow only appeared to rest, for it was no more motionless than the hour-hand of a clock. If you watched it long enough you did not see it move, but you saw that it had moved. At this point, and close to the net, grew a stunted bush and some long grasses which had escaped the general clearance, and consequently gave a little cover right up against the net. Into this the shadow melted and disappeared. A dozen light-cords had followed its progress, and now lay flat on the ground, stretching back into the dense bushes. The open belfries of Oria, Albogasio, and other lake churches now sent up some gusty bell-music proclaiming the hour of nine o'clock. The lights of the last steamer hurrying towards Lugano glimmered far below. But it was not till Gandria bells began to chime the hour that anything happened. First there was a stir on the lake. Four rays of searchlight ceased to muddle about and ran into one another, and met with a purposeful air in the recesses of a little bay. A torpedo-boat quickened its leisurely speed and hastened to join the conference. A few minutes later there came from the bushes into which the shadow had melted a sharp snick. A

pause and another snick. Another pause and a third snick. But this time the wire-cutters had snipped their way into a mesh on which there was a greater tension. A bell immediately announced the fact, and announced it sharply. Then after a pause a hand stole up, and fingers grasped the next mesh and took the sudden easing to be caused by the next snick. No more bells rang. Altogether there were twelve snicks up, twelve across, and twelve down again to the ground. A square of netting about eighteen inches by eighteen fell quietly out into Italy. A cord now moved, and presently a neat square package came trundling silently across the clearing, paused a moment, then passed through the aperture in the net, entered the noose at the end of another cord lying ready for it, and then silently and with no word passed, trundled away, under the influence of something or of somebody lying concealed on the Italian side.

In this way nine packages made the passage of the frontier, and the tenth cord was just being manipulated when —footsteps below, heavy boots stumping up the rough steps. The tenth cord slackened and lay still.

IX.

A few minutes ago we left the hall of the Bella Vista and the people seated in it wondering whether they had not had enough of music. They were still so wondering, and the younger Neapolitan fisherman was in the middle of something very impassioned. He had cut two capers at the stout lady, and she two back at him. He had then sunk on to his one knee, and she on to his other. In this position they were going at it hammer and tongs, when, outside and not far off, a shout, a shot, another shout, shrill barkings, and another shot. The two artists went on singing, and no real panic occurred, but Henrietta said once, rather sharply, "Poachers!" and the Admiral had replied with "Pooh!" twice, and very emphatically. Miss Trifler started up and began to waltz, but she was begged to sit down again, for things were about to happen, that was plain. The gravel outside scrunched under the footsteps of somebody running very quickly, and running up to the hotel. Tall grey lady who sat by the open door, and could see what was coming, rose, glided across the hall to the lift, opened its door and stood aside. Nearer sounded the steps. There were shouts behind them. Still nearer, and now they were rushing up the final slope to the door: and in rushed the Reverend Brown. Straight across the hall he dashed, and there were steps behind him: without pausing or checking, as he passed the music-stands of the Neapolitans, he swept them with a sweep of the arm

across and behind him. They were of light metal and were still clashing and bounding on the marble floor, when the fugitive plunged into the lift. Tall grey lady clanged the iron grill to: the lift had scarcely begun to rumble upward, when two guards rushed in. Their nailed boots screamed on the marble, and then became involved momentarily in the music-stands: only a moment, but it served. As the pursuers reached the grill, only a pair of legs from the knee downwards remained visible. There was a clash of a rifle-bolt drawn back and pushed home —but no, not home; a slight jam, and the lower legs of the fugitive became ankles only. Quite a good little target at so short a range, but the ankles became mere boot soles ere the rifle-bolt went truly home and the knob turned over. The two pursuers now saw that a much better chance lay upstairs, and turned from the lift and took to the stairs. But these were encumbered by half a dozen maids who had been listening to the music. Another momentary check, and some squealing. Tall grey lady might have been seen calling up the lift well, then she again stood ready by the grill and inserted the key in its lock. This and what followed all passed in such a flash that it took our breath away and kept it there; even Miss Good-enough had none left to let out the appalling screams that might have been expected from her. As it was, her velvet slippers had scarcely begun to tap the floor when there was a pause in the upward symptoms of the lift. Pursuers could be heard raging about upper floors. Then the lift began to come down. Scarcely had it touched earth, than snick went the ready key, the grill was thrown open and out dashed the parson. Across the hall, through the glass doors, and then in about two scrunches his footsteps had died away and were lost. Tall grey lady with utmost composure walks across the hall, closes the door, locks it, and dropping the key into her pocket resumed her knitting. Down storm pursuers, across the hall: hall door locked: moment's delay: agitated manager: terrified Head Waiter: and Boots sobbing with green baize apron over its head. Any other exit? Yes, certainly! This way. Through the drawing-room. Then scrunch, scrunch, and these footsteps die away too. Our mouths close with a snap, and the Admiral finds breath to say, "By Jove! diddled 'em!" There had certainly been diddling—that fact spoke for itself; but we were all utterly agog with curiosity as to why an English clergyman should be playing these unseemly antics.

Shouts in the woods round the hotel: fireflies all in and out of the spirea, and on the meadow ripe for the cutting, pay no attention, but continue firing and flying all about, and about the legs of a fugitive cleric. His Reverence knows his way about, knows that the net-guards are but the first line, and that at intervals along

the only two roads open to him he will meet others; knows too that Guards lie out in the woods, at different places every night, though he has formed a pretty shrewd idea as to where those places are. As he stands a moment in the dark pine-wood, he has the whole situation well summed up in his mind. He is not blown, he is not rattled. He wonders a little what brought that man up the hill with the dog, for he does not know about the amorous young Tuscan, and he had not time during his lightning passages through the hall to note the fair hair or the blue eyes of the young lady in the orchestra.

Given a fairly dark night, a little firing, a little shouting, and a general how-d'ye-do, and no one quite knowing the what, the why, and the where of it all, and you have all the elements of confusion. Given also a cunning fox who has anticipated things and eventualities, and keeps his head, and knows his point, and that fox has at least a fair sporting chance, and no matter what the other odds are, the only ones that count are that he will make his point. So in the case of the Reverend Brown. His point was a spot on the funicular railway, some hundred yards below the station, and some 700 yards from where we have just seen him standing at gaze in a particularly dark grove of pines. He has to cross two roads, another strip of covert, and finally a meadow, 400 yards in extent, to get there; and it is all down hill. Sounds are closing in on him, and he may wait no longer. He flicks an inquiring firefly from his sleeve and starts. He appears to have played this game before, for he displays amazing skill. He reaches the hitherward edge of the meadow, pauses a moment, and then covers the 400 yards of open at sprinting pace, though he pecks heavily at a boggy bit in the middle. Muddy to the knees, however, he reaches the thick coppice through which the funicular dives to the lake. The next moment he is examining the 'cutest little contrivance ever seen. It sits unobtrusively clamped to one of the two rails, and is a little sled or toboggan used by the funicular officials in their more sportive moments for lightning descents from hill summit to lake level, and in their less joyous hours for more leisurely journeys for the purpose of cable-greasing and permanent way inspections. Whether it has been left here by mere chance, or has been arranged for by our friend as an emergency exit, I leave you to guess; but Brown was a great one for details. The point is that he passed his hands over it, found it all correct, and seated himself leisurely on it, or inserted his person on to it, for it is a tiny contrivance, and only just accommodates him. Between his outstretched legs is a little wheel. He gives this just a quarter - turn, and then—whish! There is a stream of fire, and he shoots out of sight round the first bend. You

may imagine the velocity of the toboggan, its bearing surfaces well greased, on a single rail, and "at an angle of 65 degrees" (I quote a guide-book, which I think exaggerates, and which would have done better to have given the gradient in the usual way). The steady old blue cars, which are now safely stabled at either end of the railway, accomplish the journey in twenty minutes, but this little arrangement will do it in one, bar accidents, and always accompanied by the stream of fire—sparks do not describe the effect of the heat set up by so tremendous a friction.

At about 200 yards from the bottom the brake is applied very carefully, and 100 yards further on, at a spot where a path leading into the woods crosses the line by a little foot-bridge, the toboggan comes to a halt, and its occupant, whose eyes have been intently fixed between his boots at the racing rail ahead of them, now looks up. He does not look very far, for two rifle-barrels have a concentrating effect on any one's gaze. The rifles are in the hands of two shadowy figures, one on each side of the rail, while the head of a third figure may be discerned over the parapet of the little bridge, close to which the toboggan has come to a halt. The Reverend Brown is a prisoner.

X.

The arrangements for carrying out the great run of contraband included a diversion—I use the term strictly in its military or tactical sense. That is to say, a date had been fixed coincident with a festa, because on that night, and to the honour and glory of one of the many saints who so sadly interrupt the Italian work-a-day life, a great display of fireworks was to take place on the further side of the lake. But a strike had interfered with the arrival of the fireworks, and a much less excellent diversion had to be extemporised. Fireworks last a couple of hours, and even Guardians of Finance can be reckoned on as being human, and on turning their backs on what they were not wanted to see, and on becoming more or less wrapped up in the fireworks. The alternative diversion was a couple of boats laden with nothing dutiable, and ordered to cruise in a suspicious manner so as to become involved with the Preventive Service, as near as possible at 9 o'clock by Oria clock. This required some nice handling, but as we have seen, the operations had synchronised well; and during the net-snipping it might reasonably have been presumed that the diversion was doing what was expected of it. Unfortunately, a more attractive one, probably a Roman, had arrived that afternoon, in a one-horse shay from Argegno, bringing eyes

and hair with her of colours aforementioned.

. . . . . .

For the purposes of this story we must again go back a little. At the lake station of the funicular is another post or picket of Customs people, but these are only kept here to stare very hard at passengers coming off steamers, and sometimes block up their keyholes with tiresome little stamps. This picket goes to bed with the departure of the last steamer at a quarter to nine P.M. So it had done, or was just doing, on the night in question, but one of its members who was laying out a night-line had become aware of the lake diversion. This was well enough. So also was his calling the attention of his superior officer to it. I believe this person is called a "Brigadiere," and I will so allude to him, though his brigade consisted only of two full privates and himself. The Brigadier consults his order-board, perceives that in case of alarm he is to parade his command. This he does: and the three of them, to get a better view of the proceedings, walk just one hundred yards up the funicular, and stand on a little bridge crossing the railway. Here they command a good outlook over the lake. No harm in this. But the black abomination which the Brigadier alludes to as a cigar goes out. The wind is blowing hard on-shore. Two sulphurous abominations called matches fail to light the cigar. Brigadier then orders one of his underlings to face about, back to the lake, and to screen the next match by opening his coat. The Brigadier lights a third match, and as it begins to flare the Reverend Brown is inserting his person on to the little toboggan, not 800 yards away, although 2000 feet sounds further, and the Brigadier has his head buried in his underling's bosom, and underling has his nose elevated to escape sulphur fumes. At this moment the toboggan starts, and the underling catches—he can scarcely fail to do so—the streak of fire which accompanies it. He is a prompt fellow, for he closes his coat so suddenly that he has for a moment his superior officer's head in a species of chancery, and nips the glowing cigar-end in the bud. Prompt's the word, however, and in a jiffy the two guards are off the bridge and in the bushes on either side of the rails. The Brigadier superintends operations from the bridge with a drawn revolver. Now there is nothing against a funicular employee using his own line to travel on at night: still, Antonio, the rail-greaser, is not likely to be anywhere but in bed at this hour. In short, the Brigadier is a careful man, and an aspirant to promotion, and is not going to throw any chances away. He has just completed his plan of action, when, with a gentle squeak, the toboggan comes to a halt, and the Reverend Brown steps into the hands of his captors.

Certainly these foreigners do odd things. This one is laugh-

ing, almost blasphemously, at the Brigadier, as he asks him if he can speak French, and then offers him a cigarette, with "Objet de vertu, Brigadier —personal use—not more than half a dozen on me—word of honour." Yes, the Brigadier can speak French, and will not smoke. The party descends to the little office at the bottom of the hill. The captive continues, "Well, now, d'you know an English clergyman when you see him? No? Well, I'm one. We wear waistcoats like this and collars like this." The speaker indicates his correct go-astern collar and stern-foremost waistcoat. He continues, "Am I carrying contraband? Feel me and see. English clergymen don't, you know." The Brigadier ponders this. His own paroccio, for instance —but then, perhaps, they're different. So he strokes his unshaven chin and makes a non-committal noise. "Now," continues the captive with engaging frankness, "I'll tell you what I was doing. Have you ever been up at St Moritz yonder? No? Well, they toboggan there in the snow, for fun, you know; yes, even clergymen. Well, one day I saw Antonio up at the funicular station: I had a little talk with Antonio: I made a little arrangement with the excellent Antonio: I wanted to toboggan: I have tobogganed. Though mind you now, if I had known you gentlemen would be up and about—and I might have known it, for they say you have to be up *very* early to catch our Brigadier asleep—why, I should not have disturbed you as I have done. Now come! A flask of what? Asti Spumanti? And then a few cigars at the Osteria? And then a thousand apologies to you, Signor Brigadier, and we'll all to bed, which reminds me that I shall go up a little slower than I came down. Ha! ha!"

They have now reached the office, and the bright electric light shows the captive to be a little torn and stained. But he inserts his muddy legs under a table, and keeps them out of sight. Certainly there is nothing contraband on him. But the Brigadier is a cautious man and a slow man, and one who likes to base any sort of official action on paragraphs in books of regulations. So he puts on spectacles, and selects a tome from several on a shelf, and seeks in its pages for something cognisable, some matter of indictment. He can, however, find no paragraph or section bearing even remotely on parties sliding down railways, unless the said parties are in possession of contraband. His slow mind is coming to the conclusion that the case is not within the orbit of his jurisdiction. At this moment a very sharp insistent ringing of the telephone interrupts these ponderings. The prisoner looks quietly towards the one exit. No hope that way. He has borne this suspense with immovable face, for he was expecting that ring. But now he says under his breath something short, something sharp,

something that no clergyman ever says. He knows that his last chance is flitting, all owing to this ponderous ass; and meanwhile the telephone is buzzing on, and more or less, but not quite, giving the show away, and ordering the Brigadier to watch certain paths and to warn other folk to watch certain other paths. And then they ring off, and still the dull-brained official fails to connect all this pother with the person seated nonchalantly at his very elbow. And then the telephone speaks sharply again, and the Brigadier says "'Ullo!" and a forgetful person at the other end gives a fairly accurate description of the fugitive; and the Brigadier smiles a slow fat smile, and gives the necessary orders for securing what he hopes may prove a valuable prize. For the telephone has intimated that the fugitive was recognised as the enterprising, the astute, and the long-wanted Virgilio Lavini, darling of the countryside and the despair of all good brigadiers.

XI.

A few days later, no matter how, I was accorded an interview with Virgilio Lavini. He was still in clerical get-up, and seemed in consequence very much out of keeping with the surroundings of the detention-room of the Caserne in which he was confined. He received me with the utmost aplomb, and seemed in the best of spirits. The following is the account he gave of himself. "You remember," he said, "the stranger who helped the Englishman with the sprained ankle? Well, that was myself. I dare say you had guessed it. No? That meeting was purely a chance one. So was our next on the Lugano steamer. I was stouter then, you may remember, and resented, naturally, being handled by the Customs fellow. By-the-bye, if I might respectfully suggest it, I should drop the verb 'to cook'—one of our most irregular and tiresome. Read an Italian newspaper, and talk when and where you can, and you'll be able to laugh at the verb 'to cook' in no time. The signorina, your esteemed sister, speaks our language, if I may judge by that one word, altogether admirably. Will you present her with my sincere regard and esteem, and tell her how flattered I was when I found that I passed muster with her as an Englishman? Her voice is of an excellent and bell-like resonance. It reassured me completely as to the clothes. It was my first appearance in that character. Nothing but the clothes worried me. But then that Customs fellow! He was a blunderer. He had the perception to think that he had recognised me: but then to go and tell me so! I have to thank you for your kind aid

in the little trouble that followed. Now, did I behave in all respects as an English baronet and one of your M.P.'s would have behaved? A thousand thanks. I shall not forget. But I had often read in your English sporting papers the expression 'he let out with his left': and this I had always supposed referred to the left elbow. You will recollect, however, that the elbow answered my purpose. Ah! those trousers and the strawberries! After that little incident I had, of course, to abandon my *rôle* of English baronet. Then my wife (the lady you know as my mother) thought of a parson's *rôle*, and we immediately went into rehearsal. We went to a hotel where several clergymen were staying, with their wives. Good people, but of a dulness quite inconceivable. Is it always Baedeker and Bible with them? I took up with the clergymen, and my wife with their wives: then I with the wives, and she with the husbands. How we worked at the part, she and I! In ten days we had mastered it, all but two things—the dulness and my Italian gestures. During rehearsal my wife would tie my hands to my side. But the eyebrows, and the shoulders! For them it was a sharp hat-pin. Every time I moved them my wife stabbed me in the arm, and stabbed hard: the pain cured me. Then the cold tubs! We neglected not the smallest detail. Do all your clergymen do penance in this way? Frightful! Frightful! My wife spoke on this matter with the wives, and they all said, 'Yes, every morning, even in winter.' I begged, I implored, but my wife is more artist than even I. She insisted, and I was fool enough to have a cold tub—once! Oh, la! la! and one lira charged for it in the *note de semaine!* After that, believe me, a visit to the bathroom certainly, then a little singing, a little splashing, a few wet foot-marks, a wet towel, and enough! I paid the lira cheerfully. At last we were perfect; we put it to the test; we dined with our friends of the church, as new arrivals. There were questions to answer certainly, but we had thought of all that. No one recognised us.

"Just at that time your English chaplain had left the Bella Vista, and you will realise how favourably situated is that hotel for my professional purposes. Besides, you, my friend, were living there, and your esteemed sister. So we came. No, not to take the services, though my wife, who is more artist than good Catholic, would have had even that. And the rest you know. There remain, dear friend, but the thousand apologies for the little deceptions I played off on you, and a thousand gratitudes for the pleasant walks we had."

I asked this artist how long he had been in England to have acquired our language as he had. He assured me that personally he had never put foot in my native land. His

wife had been born and lived many years there, and our cheap magazines, sporting papers, and Mr de Morgan's novels, he had read and read assiduously. He confessed that the novels had bored him to distraction, but had answered the purpose with which he had read them. He had frequented English-haunted hotels, in every capacity from that of Boots to, as success brought the means, client. But the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole matter was, he was "Artist," and so was his wife.

Now we all have a certain sympathy (within certain limits) with boldness, enterprise, acuteness, and success, and a smuggler has never been, and will never be, an unpopular character. We have all smuggled ourselves in a small way, and can admire, though we may condemn, those who do it in a big way. I am therefore free to confess that I left the enterprising and artistic Mr Lavini with a certain feeling of regret that so bright a bird should be exchanging freedom for a cage. It was not till I had left the Caserne that I bethought me that I had not asked Mr Lavini what were his prospects in this matter, but my friend the baker in our village, whom I have had too often to reproach on the score of the hard bread he supplies, and who is a man who knows everything about everybody, did something to relieve my apprehensions. The baker has served seven years in a New York bar, and speaks English very well, and always says "No, sir," and "Yes, sir," to Henrietta. He assured me that the bright bird had money in plenty, and he winked so tremendously when he made what should have been this quite irrelevant statement, that I was left under the impression that there were palms in Italy ready for the greasing, and that Virgilio Lavini was quite artist enough to do it in the best and most artistic way.

X.

TURKISH SKETCHES.

BY W. J. C.

I. THE *GOEBEN* AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

When the story of the Ottoman Empire's share in the Great War comes to be written in full, historians are not likely to dismiss the *Goeben* with merely a passing notice. They are more likely to trace her influence upon events at some length. They may even find that her presence in the Bosphorus for two years before war began turned the scale, and brought the Islamic Empire to the active assistance of Germany. Indeed, one can easily imagine that an Osmanli historian, writing in some obscure city far from the delightful places of lost Istambul, may so deal with the *Goeben* that his race shall always link her name with the story of national downfall. As it is, one suspects that Prussian General, August Karl von Goeben, a hero of 1870, is already more secure of remembrance by the ship of his name than by his own achievements.

The *Goeben* first appeared at Constantinople in November 1912, when it seemed likely that the Bulgarian Army would enter the city. She came at a period when German reputation had fallen low in the Ottoman Empire. The German-trained Turkish Army, of which so much had been expected, had collapsed ignominiously before the armies of the Balkan States. When the *Goeben* arrived the thunder of Bulgarian guns at Chatalja could be heard daily in the Turkish capital.

Whatever the ultimate purpose of her visit, it was a shrewd move that brought the ship to Constantinople at this juncture. Eighteen or twenty fighting ships of many nations had assembled there, and the gathering inevitably became in Turkish eyes a sort of international exhibition of naval strength. Excepting the *Goeben*, accident or convenience seemed to have done most in deciding the vessels sent, though on our part there may have been a definite intention to avoid ostentatious display. So it was a motley fleet of fourth-rate ships into which the overpowering German, called the finest battle-cruiser afloat, steamed easily one morning.

Native newspapers of the capital found a great deal to say about the *Goeben*. Particulars of her dimensions, tonnage, speed, guns, and armour were soon being bandied about with surprising glibness; also the humble particulars of other ships were given for comparison. Staid and elderly Turks, who might have been supposed to know nothing of marine matters, spoke of knots and horse-

power as if familiar things. Whatever else a knot might be, they knew it as some standard of speed in which the *Goeben's* twenty-seven was obviously better than the British *Hampshire's* twenty-one. Every one knew, too, that the *Goeben* was six hundred metres long and twenty-five in width. Most had the exact number of her crew. And the power of her guns was impressed on all by the statement that were she, unhappily, Russian, she could lie in the Black Sea, thirty kilometres away, and fling shells into Stamboul itself. This perhaps was an exaggeration, but it was believed.

In these circumstances she soon became invested with a sort of dominating personality. No foreign war-vessel was so well known as the German *Goeben.* None attracted so much popular interest; and none embodied so completely the ambitions, spirit, and might of her country.

With these advantages she was cleverly stage-managed to keep her in the public eye and make the most of her fame. She anchored in the Bosphorus opposite the hill on which the German Embassy stands. Like that prominent and challenging building—surmounted by rows of huge bronze eagles silhouetted against the sky—she was where she could be seen by all, and also where Embassy and warship could be seen together. The eye went inevitably from the German flag above the Embassy to the German flag upon the great battle-cruiser below. A mere trifle this, perhaps, but a trifle whose suggestion was subtle. The hillside shelf just below Tashkishlar barracks, popularly called "The Stones," always had gazing people, sometimes in crowds, for there the best view of the *Goeben* could be obtained. She lay abreast of this spot, at the head of the line of foreign warships that stretched to the Golden Horn.

By comparison two nine-thousand-ton Italians near her looked like small tramp steamers; the French cruisers made no greater figure; a stumpy little Russian battleship not far away might have been an old sailing ironclad; and the British *Hampshire* and *Weymouth* were modest craft altogether. Certainly the British *Zealandia*—a big ship in her day—presently arrived and anchored just ahead of the *Goeben;* but the German was half as long again, and benefited by the contrast.

Spending an hour at "The Stones" in those days, you would hear comparisons made and deductions drawn. They were perfectly just by the evidence in sight; and on this evidence observers had no doubt which nation made the most impressive figure. There seemed to be some element of Turkish vanity involved in judging the international fleet. It found expression somewhat thus: In a matter affecting the Turkish capital foreign nations were sending their warships to "the hospitality of the Bosphorus"—so a phrase had it. Anything affecting the capital of the Ottoman Empire must

of course be of enormous importance to foreign nations. If it was necessary to send warships at all, foreign nations would therefore be sure to send their best to impress us.

Of comparisons and deductions these might have been heard among others: In this fleet the German ship is evidently newer and greater and better than any other. The English ships are not new and are not large. At one time the English Navy was greater than any in the world; but those days have past; the German Navy is the navy of the future. The English nation is like the English Navy; and is it not probable that the German nation is like the German Navy? Germany is building the Bagdad Railway.

On Bosphorus steamers, too, as they passed the *Goeben*, passengers would gather at the side and improve their ideas by a close inspection. Remarks followed the same line as those just given, but were often amusingly naïve. The *Goeben's* guns were being discussed one day in passing. A passenger carefully counted them — "Eight," he said. "Eight great guns in one ship. How admirable!" "No, effendi; Ten!" corrected his friend, who had looked into this matter before. He was anxious that the German wonder-ship should receive her full due, and pointed out the additional pair when they came into view, also the numerous smaller weapons. So many big guns, they agreed, sank the vessel low in the water; but what was that to the advantage of having ten in one ship! Constantinople fell to the Turks by the attack of great guns, and ever since the people have had a traditional liking for such.

After dark, the *Goeben* was generally a blaze of light, for she did much entertaining. Turkish notables and officers were her frequent and welcome guests. Presently it was whispered that the ship might be sold to the Turks as a proof of German goodwill. Here was a happy development, some thought; such a fine ship would be just the thing when the present war was over. In the event of further trouble happening with the Greeks she would be ready to use. Single-handed she could blow the whole Greek fleet out of the water. More especially—and this was a great point—she was capable of running down the speedy Greek cruiser *Averof*, at the time making a large and awkward figure in the Turkish mind. In support of her reputation the *Goeben* would occasionally leave the Bosphorus and arrive at another port after an incredibly rapid passage. If she had half a gale and a head sea so much the better; for in these circumstances she could present her best appearance, and move with bursting spray flying higher than her funnels, and overhead a rainbow of her own making. The present writer passed her at sea two or three times, and on each occasion she was travelling in this impressive fashion.

Negotiations for her sale came to nothing; so she continued her political mission. It is not too much to say that in a short time she did much to help in restoring German prestige. She also brought home to Turkish minds the advantages conferred by possession of a ship of her power. But all these advantages were greatly exaggerated. Not only was the *Goeben* thought to be almost the only ship of her class afloat, but she and her sort were credited with fabulous powers of offence and defence—each ship was a navy by itself. A further popular idea was that by means of the *Goeben* or another such the country might presently regain territory that had been lost. The national security, at least, would be ensured against all enemies.

In those days there was no thought of war with England, who was an old and valued friend. Russia was the traditional enemy, and the one against which — not counting Greece—preparations should be directed.

A Turkish officer, whose views perhaps represented those of his class, once outlined to the writer how he saw the future. His opinions throw a little light upon the subsequent history of the *Goeben*, and so may be given here.

The Balkan War, he said, had proved a painful disappointment, but would turn out for the good of his country. With it Turkey's European problems had nearly come to an end. She would look now to Asia, where she had territory enough, and where her Moslem population lived.

The enemy from whom most was to be feared, of course, was Russia. If Russia saw an opportunity, she was certain to make an attempt on Constantinople, possession of that city and with it control of the waterway being necessary for her. He did not believe that England would ever again support his country against Russia. But Turkey had found a fresh friend. Had not the German Ambassador declared that any Russian attempt at aggrandisement in Asia Minor would mean war between Russia and Germany? German support would have to be watched, but would be decidedly useful; he could see his country getting benefit from it and yet eluding its dangers. After all, German and Ottoman territories were not contiguous, and Germany could be kept off. In a war between his own country and Russia, the reorganised Turkish Army could hold its own on the Eastern frontier. Turkish ability to maintain herself against Russia, however, really depended on there being a sufficient Turkish naval force in the Black Sea to prevent a Russian expedition coming by water and landing near Constantinople. To get and maintain such a force was vital, and that, he believed, was the official view. Any sacrifice would be made to obtain it. It was for that purpose that Dreadnoughts were being built in England for Turkey. In

the meantime it would be well to buy the *Goeben*. The *Goeben* and Turkish torpedo-boats would control the Black Sea, for no fleet of Russian transports could cross it while they were afloat. The *Goeben* could not be caught; she could fight at long range; and her presence in the Black Sea would make Turkey impregnable against Russia until the new Dreadnoughts were ready. So he was all for buying the *Goeben*. Under the naval and military conditions that he asked for he hoped to see his country moderately Westernised and greatly developed, abuses removed, and, of all things, the Mohammedan faith revised within limits. Mahomet, he remarked, never intended that any teachings of his should place the Faithful at a disadvantage with Unbelievers.

It appears now that the Turkish view of possibilities put forward by this officer was that held by those in authority. It appears, also, that at the last it was exploited by Germans and the pro-German party at Constantinople. They pictured the *Goeben*, with a German crew, tearing about the Black Sea, avoiding close fight, shooting enemy ships to pieces at long range, and making any Russian attempt to convey troops by water impossible. With the Black Sea coast so protected they pictured also Russia occupied in Poland, her allies occupied in the West, and the Dardanelles impregnable against naval attack. British ability to send a great military expedition to this point was derided—if ever considered. In this fortunate combination of circumstances Turkey would be free to go down to Egypt; to annex in Persia; to recover territory where she liked. It was a dazzling prospect, and it was backed by German gold for those who could push it—backed also by the *Goeben* and *Breslau* to overawe any Turkish party that might oppose it. Considering all things, one cannot wonder that the plot succeeded.

II. TWO BOSPHORUS CASTLES.

On the European shore of the Bosphorus, six miles above Constantinople, a ledge of rock is pointed out which bears the name of Darius' Seat. It is high in the face of a precipitous hillside overhanging the water, and looks upon one of the fairest stretches of the Bosphorus, and one that has seen the making of no little history. There on a hot day you may linger pleasantly amid pine and ilex and fig, and watch the ships of many nations go by, looking down upon their decks, and recall some of the scenes that have happened within view. For hereabouts the Bosphorus is at its narrowest, and this was a crossing-place for armies; and the point where, in the infancy of cannon, the strait

could be most easily closed to shipping.

Nor is it much effort to reconstruct the past. Darius' Seat is no mere fanciful appellation; and there are visible reminders at hand of other old events. Close beside and below you are the grey walls and towers of Roumeli Hissar—the Castle of Europe; and a bare half mile away across the Bosphorus the yet older Anadoli Hissar—the Castle of Asia. Between them they had much to do with the Turkish conquest of Constantinople nearly 500 years ago, and they set their story well.

Anadoli Hissar stands in a valley, beside the mouth of that small river which is called pleasantly the Sweet Waters of Asia; and the valley itself is a natural feature which has determined the course of events. Among the tangle of steep-sided hills beside the Bosphorus it provided some space of level land where troops could encamp and find abundance of water. And it is fertile beyond belief —producing several crops a year — and on this score is sometimes called the Seventh Valley of the World, though which the six superior no one can tell you.

Into this fruitful valley, with its shady trees and running water, came Darius twenty-five centuries ago, wishing to pass into Europe—with 700,000 men, the books say. One surmises confidently that Darius sought passage here on the advice of a Greek. For with him was Mandrocles, a Greek of Samos, an engineer who had in mind the building of a great bridge, doubtless for his own immediate personal profit. Stretched upon the grass of Darius' ledge of rock, with curling tobacco-smoke rising lazily in the sweltering air, the Bosphorus seen glistening between trees, and the hills beyond the valley of the Sweet Waters going away in a succession of blue ridges that at last seem to merge into the sky, you are able to think with insight of this ingenious opportunist Mandrocles. That he was with Darius at all bespoke him something of an adventurer. As a son of old maritime Samos — vessels flying the flag of modern Samos pass during your reverie—he was likely to have gone to and fro upon the Bosphorus. He may even have helped to row against its currents himself in those times of leanness that occasionally overtake adventurers. He certainly knew of the slack water under the shelter of Canlija Point, and of the reverse current which travels upwards off the mouth of the Sweet Waters river as part of a great eddy. He knew also of the good holding-bottom for anchors in the quiet and comparatively shallow water of the great eddy, and of the four hundred feet depth of the fast current just outside it. He did not learn these local features by hasty and impromptu survey under the urgent and perhaps threatening eye of Darius standing upon the shore. He had all this knowledge in advance, knew what he was about, and

brought the Persians here for his own benefit.

So he was able to construct his bridge of boats, considered a marvel in its time. The great army passed over safely, and Darius, perhaps attended by Mandrocles, watched the operation from this ledge of rock that now bears his name. And when all had passed he set up two columns, one on either shore, to mark the place of achievement; but they, of course, have long disappeared.

It is no part of the story that Darius and his army went on to Scythia after the passage; but there is an incident of the expedition which justifies mention. To cross the Danube more bridge-building had to be done on a great scale, and again it was Greeks—probably Mandrocles—who did the work successfully. Darius left orders that if he did not return in sixty days this bridge was to be destroyed. He did not appear within the time, and the Greeks proposed to take him at his word—thereby, as was urged among themselves, ensuring the extinction of Darius and his army as recognised dangers to the Greek race. But these Greek engineers had second thoughts on the matter, and found them better. They reflected that with the loss of Darius would come the downfall of the Oligarchs who ruled in the Greek States of western Asia Minor—Samos, Mitylene, Miletus, and the rest—and the bridge was maintained. It saved the Persians in their disastrous retreat; and a few years later Darius undertook the invasion of Greece.

There was a period of nearly 2000 years after Darius before the Castles of Anadoli and Roumeli Hissar were built. Anadoli Hissar was erected by Bayezid in 1397, when Turkish conquest had reached the Bosphorus. For nearly sixty years the strait marked the limit of advance in this direction, though Turkish sovereignty extended across the Hellespont and over Balkan lands to the Danube and Black Sea. When Mahomet II., who was to win the title of Conqueror, ascended the Ottoman throne, all that remained of the ancient Byzantine Empire was Constantinople, some small territory before its walls, and a strip along the European shore of the Bosphorus. In the first year of his reign Mahomet set on foot those operations which two years later gave him possession of the imperial city. He crossed the Bosphorus from Anadoli Hissar and began to erect Roumeli Hissar, aiming to control the waterway.

Gibbon has something to say about the building of this castle. It gives him an opportunity to use resounding names in a large, vague sense. So he records with apparent relish that "materials by sea and land were diligently transported from Europe and Asia. The lime had been burnt in Cataphrygia, the timber cut down in the woods of Heraclea and Nicomedia, and the stones were dug from Anatolian quarries." More to the point

is his account of how the construction was pushed on. "Each of a thousand masons," he says, "was assisted by two workmen, and a measure of two cubits was marked for their daily task." And then after wrongly describing the outline and form of the fortress, he continues: "Mahomet himself pressed and directed the work with indefatigable ardour; his three vizirs claimed the honour of finishing their respective towers: the zeal of the Cadhis emulated that of the Janizaries: the meanest labour was ennobled by the service of God and the Sultan: and the diligence of the multitude was quickened by the eye of a despot whose smile was the hope of fortune, and whose frown was the messenger of death."

In these circumstances of compulsion and fanatical enthusiasm no wonder the structure was completed in five months.

It was the early days of cannon — Roumeli Hissar was completed and armed sixty-two years before Flodden was fought—but the Castle's chief purpose was to carry guns great enough to command the Bosphorus. Mahomet had already given much attention to this new and decisive weapon, and now led the world in developing it. He found a Hungarian engineer skilled in casting ordnance, and between them guns of a calibre never equalled before or since were eventually produced, though not for Roumeli Hissar. Those mounted here seem to have been experimental as to size; they marked a great advance, but were small compared with some cast for the siege of Constantinople two years later, or those for the Dardanelles castles. In and about Roumeli Hissar you may still find the marble shot provided for the great battery, and they measure about 15 inches in diameter.

One can imagine that Mahomet as a youthful specialist in guns—he was but twenty-one—lost no time in proving what the battery of his new fortress could do. He declared the Bosphorus closed. And when the master of a Venetian galley insisted on passing, the ship was fired upon and sunk by a single shot. It was a convincing proof, and Mahomet must have felt that Constantinople was at last in his power. Perhaps it was this assurance that prompted his treatment of the galley's crew. By boat or swimming thirty of them reached the shore, indignant enough, one supposes, at this outrage put upon them when following their lawful occasions. They were seized on landing; the master was impaled and the crew beheaded, as warning to any other stiff-necked mariners who might think of questioning the new rule of the Bosphorus. A Greek historian records having seen the heads exposed at Demotika, far in the interior of Thrace. The galley seems to have been a passenger vessel and her master well known, for another historian records that he had travelled with him.

With the fall of Constanti-

nople Roumeli and Anadoli Hissar had fulfilled their purpose. During the days of Ottoman greatness there was no need for fortresses to close or protect the Bosphorus. It was an inland waterway connecting the two Ottoman lakes of the Black Sea and Sea of Marmora, and became the placid and delightful home-waters of the Ottoman capital. The castles were used from time to time as prisons for captives taken in war. When again it was necessary to fortify the Bosphorus, that work was done at the Black Sea entrance, and the castles became a mere antiquated second line of defence. And then at last their old guns were removed and the structures allowed to fall into picturesque decay.

Anadoli Hissar now makes a modest appearance—a bold, square, stone keep rising above the Moslem village that has been built around it beside the Sweet Waters. You see it best if on a summer morning you hire a caique or varca and bid the boatman row you across the Bosphorus and into the river of the Sweet Waters. So doing you are taken close beside the castle, and see it as a grey monument of Bayezid and Mahomet the Conqueror. Once a hopeful outpost of the encroaching Ottoman power, it has looked across the Bosphorus for 500 years; has witnessed the rise, culmination, and decline of that power. It may see the end; and hereafter figure as the monument of a great European adventure by a race that came out of Middle Asia, grew exceedingly, played a resounding part awhile, and then was driven out. To this end one would like to see Anadoli Hissar carefully preserved.

When over here it is worth while to row up the river for the mile or two more that boats can pass. On Fridays and Sundays and feast-days in summer it is a favourite haunt of pleasure-seekers. At these times every open-air café under the trees beside the river is crowded, and the boats by which people come make a sort of Thames up-river regatta scene; but shabby, and without the movement and energy and brightness of those events.

If Anadoli Hissar is unpretending in appearance, not so is its brother of Roumeli. The Castle of Europe carries itself as one ranking among the most impressive of castles, a peer among the best. It is not that its size is so great—though that is considerable—but more by position and surroundings that it makes its claim. It is impressive and commanding from whichever point you see it, and these by the nature of the site are many. It is built on a high promontory, and one great tower seems to stand on the point of that rock. You see it from far down the Bosphorus, looming above the dark cypresses that clothe the slope; you see it, too, from the upper waters of the Bosphorus standing above woods and clustering houses. Seen from a passing steamer it lays its steep courtyard and

inner village open to view, and its two upper towers and upper wall upon the ridge stand bold and trenchant against the sky.

But it is when you climb the southern tower upon the promontory that you understand what a position the castle has. No other Bosphorus views equal those to be had here. You must be 300 feet above the water, and yet it is so immediately below that you think a stone might be tossed into it. Vessels are seen as if looked down upon from a bridge. You look down also on the red roofs of the village within the castle and of the greater village without, and upon the massive water-side tower on which tradition says that Mahomet II. stood and watched his guns being fired. Gazing southward, the Bosphorus and its recurring headlands and bays are open to Stamboul and the Sea of Marmora, and northward as far as Beicos. The wooded hills enclosing the valley of the Sweet Waters, and Canlija and Candilli heights both dotted with houses, seem to rise the greater for your own lofty position, and to be close at hand beyond a blue river flowing in its gorge. Only inland, behind you, is the scene out of harmony. There at the foot of the tower begin the buildings of an American college —Robert College, of fame throughout Turkey and the Balkan States—whose buildings are great, and raw, and modern, and have no grace of created surroundings, although in a noble position. Perhaps no other college in the world can show such innate hostility between its students as this one. There are — or were — hundreds of students, — Bulgarians, Serbians, Greeks, Armenians, and others,—and they bring with them all the national rivalries and jealousies of their respective people. It is no small tribute to the college that it manages to impose some degree of mutual toleration under its roofs.

There is a path going up from the waterside to this tower, on the southern side, which sometimes provides a glimpse you would like to bring away in adequate colours. It goes through the cypresses, winding among them, and turning past rocks with the tower always in view, high upon its airy perch; and up the path climb loaded asses driven by men in picturesque dress of the brightest colours. See such a procession in hot white sunlight, winding past the cypresses, between whose trunks the blue water below appears, and the scene is one that seems to stand for the Bosphorus, and to sum up and convey its spirit. But having seen this sight you should not follow the path too far, or you may come upon an anticlimax. A little farther up you may, indeed, find a base-ball game in progress, perhaps between American bluejackets and the American colony — for about Roumeli Hissar is where the colony lives. And the cries at this game and the dress that is worn are neither the cries nor dress of the ancient East, but of the newest West.

III. A NIGHT WITH DERVISHES.

In Constantinople you may see at any time Howling dervishes, who howl professionally in their worship; and in Konia Whirling dervishes, who similarly whirl instead of howl. And upon the road, and in villages and country towns of the Turkish Empire, are to be met dervishes of the mendicant orders,—wild-eyed, austere men carrying bowl and battle-axe, who wander afoot to places where most alms may be found. But those dervishes who lacerate themselves as the aim of their ecstasy are not, I think, to be found in any district near the coast or easy of access. In only one small town, a long way in the interior of Asia Minor, did I ever see one of their performances, and then it was in the way of a favour.

The American missionary who was my host had many dervish sheikhs among his friends, so one day an invitation came for us to attend a dervish service. It was for a Friday evening—the Moslem Sunday—and the service was to be regarded in the nature of a prayer-meeting, with manifestations following as the result of prayer. The verbal invitation added that the service would be a complete one. In other words, the dervishes were to do everything included in the custom of their Order, and the time occupied would be correspondingly long.

The service was timed to begin at eight. It was dark when three Americans and myself set out — carrying a lantern to avoid the risk of being shot at as evil-doers. We arrived early at the appointed building, and putting off our boots at the door, entered a low room, forty or fifty feet long, twenty-five or thirty wide, and lit by a few oil lamps upon the walls. Dervishes do not have mosques, and here was the lowly meeting-place in which the Order performed its worship.

Across one end of the room, beside the door, extended a low platform protected by a railing. This was the area reserved for women, who presently filled it completely. All of them were veiled; but being in a place where they were entitled to be, and there for the purpose of seeing, they showed nothing of the startled manner that Moslem women usually assume in the presence of European men. We sat on stools just in front of the railing, and these women, in their circumstances of privilege, had the marvellous sight of four Christian men at close quarters.

Fifty or sixty men and boys gradually assembled, ordinary folk of the town and adjoining villages. These were the dervishes; for a dervish sheikh's following stand in somewhat the same position to him that the members of a church choir or village band do to their parson or conductor. The sheikh is their head for the time being; under him they sing or

perform; they have joined for no profit, but for their own satisfaction.

A dozen or more young boys presently formed a semicircle at the farther end of the room around the sheikh. They dropped on their knees and broke in a shrill, chanted repetition. As they chanted they swayed their bodies, sometimes sideways, sometimes to and fro; sometimes they smote their hands. At first their attention was not in the prayer; they still found the foreign visitors a distraction, and from time to time looked round at us. Both chant and movement grew ragged, and the sheikh beat time, and now and again gave a lead in the chanted prayer himself. In this way he soon had the boys going in earnest; and then a new note came into the voices and a new rhythm into their movements. They became unconscious of the visitors; chant and movement grew more and more rapid; you had the feeling that what they were doing they were doing for itself, and that it had taken possession and was drawing them along. You felt also that it must lead to something; that it would not reach a certain point and then recede. Something, it seemed, must happen at the end.

So soon as the sheikh had settled the boys in their chant he came to his guests. We could not see well where we were, he said. He took us to the other end of the room and placed us close to him, at the side, but facing the performers. There was to be no opportunity for us to call ourselves deceived. We were to see whatever our eyes could show us.

The sheikh himself made a satisfying figure, both in appearance and manner. He was broad and powerfully built, of height above the average, full bearded, with a tinge of red in it. His age was about forty. He was dressed in a long white gown and white turban, and like all sheikhs had a well-groomed, contented, healthy look—life went well with him you would say. He was kindly and pleasant in face, and altogether unassuming; but evidently much the master, not only of what was going on but of what was yet to come; like one about to show his skill and confident of his powers. But there was nothing of the showman's air; spectators were here for their benefit, not for his; they were welcome, but came as a privilege and were unnecessary.

The boys may have continued the chanting half an hour without anything happening; but now they were plainly near some crisis. Their shrill voices had become thinner and more shrill; their words came too quickly to be intelligible; their eyes were staring into vacancy; and though they swayed and rocked like a single figure, you expected them to fall every moment. The sheikh made a sign and the chanting ceased, the boys rose and stood around him. A bundle of flat, bright steel skewers six inches long was handed to the

sheikh, who drew them quickly through his mouth, one by one. Then taking a small cardboard disc from an attendant he pressed it on a boy's bare forearm. The middle of the disc had a circular hole, large as a half-crown, and under pressure the flesh bulged through it, making a slight dome. Through this projection the sheikh deftly thrust a skewer, fastening the disc to the arm. He treated each boy in the same way, sometimes attaching two or even three skewers by request; and these ardent disciples he would pat on the head and commend with a smile and pleasant word. Then he told them to show their arms to us, and they crowded round anxious for us to touch and examine. There was no deception about it; yet no blood could be seen and the boys felt no pain.

But this was only the introductory scene by novices. While we looked at the skewered arms, twenty-five or thirty men formed in a wide semicircle before the sheikh. These were the fully-qualified devotees who were to do all things, and who now began their preparation. They showed none of the early slackness of the boys, and went off at once in a deep-toned, chanted repetition of holy phrases, into which each man threw his energy and soul as if the sooner to attain a much-desired end. Their ordeal was to be severe and the preparation had to be in keeping; so they went through it standing up, to allow of violent movement. To help in this serious work two swordsmen appeared. They were muscular fellows, naked to the waist and barefooted, and placed themselves a few yards apart facing the semicircle. They began to leap slowly and softly, keeping time with the chant and motion of the others, and making passes and lunges towards the semicircle with their long curved swords. There was something extraordinarily fascinating in this scene of fanatical sound and rhythmic motion. The actors were in too deadly earnest for it to have any aspect of a performance for profit or show. You felt they had already reached a state of exaltation in which other matters were of no importance at all; that death itself would be nothing, or perhaps even something to be welcomed at this time. It seemed well also that they took no notice of you, a Christian. Hearing their fierce and almost savage invocations, and watching their swaying bodies, blazing eyes, and the slowly bounding swordsmen, you felt strangely out of place and unprepared; that this was not company in which you should find yourself unarmed. There was also a growing influence at work impelling you to join the semicircle of swaying men and utter cries with them. My missionary friend sat rigid and silent, but another American whispered that he wanted "to yell some"; and that remark well hit off the feeling of tension. But as yet the

preparation was in its early stage, and the devotees had another hour of it to go. The true ecstatic stage was something only to be gained with patience and much hard striving.

So the chanted prayers went on, growing ever deeper and more fierce. The bodies swayed and stooped in quicker movement; and feet smote the floor together in sudden, startling emphasis. And always the catlike, naked swordsmen, their bodies glistening with sweat, their blades circling and lunging or held horizontally aloft in both hands, were bounding softly in perfect time with the semicircle. Moslem use of the word Allah always has a striking sound for foreign ears, and is given a reverence of intonation not to be mistaken. Also they do not pronounce it in the way represented by our spelling, but more like Ul-law, with a sudden, almost explosive accent on the first syllable, a dwelling on the middle consonants, followed by a long accent on the last syllable. In the mouths of these ecstatic worshippers it became an invocation heard each time with curious satisfaction.

But at last there were signs of the long preparation being over. Knives were being handled by the sheikh's two servers; they held also wooden balls, larger than a big orange, through which ran a steel spindle a foot and a half in length, and sharpened at each end. By this time the devotees were rocking with excitement and exhaustion, their voices had the fierce note of fighting animals, and their eyes were flaming in frenzy. They had linked arms for support some while before, and but for the precaution several would have fallen.

Presently two men left the semicircle and stood before the sheikh. On them the preparation had done its work and they were ready to begin laceration. The sheikh licked the blades of two, thin, dagger-like knives with his tongue and handed them to the devotees. Each immediately pressed the knife through his own cheeks. It went in at one side and the point came out at the other. Meanwhile the swordsmen leapt and the semicircle roared and swayed with redoubled energy. Again the sheikh licked two knives and handed them to the men; and again they pushed them through their cheeks, this time in the opposite direction. No blood flowed, and the operation looked as harmless, once you had seen it done, as stabbing a Dutch cheese. The sheikh drew out the knives, wet the ball of his thumb upon his tongue, clapped it on the holes, and no holes could be seen, but merely white scars. Now one who has not seen these or similar things done may think that some sleight of hand took place, or failing that possibility that I imagined these sights, being under strong influence so to do. I can only offer the evidence of my senses. I was within a distance of two or three yards when the cheeks were pierced; looked at

them from two feet with the knives still in position; and at the same distance looked at the white scars that a few seconds before had been palpable holes. If I was hypnotised, so were all of us, for we saw alike.

When the display with knives was over two other men came forward as candidates for the spiked balls. The upper and lower points of the spikes were licked by the sheikh, and play began. The lower point was placed in the open palm of one hand, the upper point was capped by the open palm of the other, and then by a slight circular movement of the upper hand the ball was rotated violently. As it did so short lengths of chain attached to the circumference spread out and acted as a fly-wheel. With the balls spinning in this fashion the men began to leap, throwing them into the air, catching them with the point on an open palm, and always keeping up the spinning. It was clever in its way, but no more; and I was thinking it a simple trick, when one man dashed the spiked point forcibly into his head. The other fellow immediately followed by thrusting his into his neck. Both balls fell over, and hung suspended with the point remaining in the flesh. These wounds immediately drew blood. Blood-drawing, however, was not in the game; it showed something amiss; insufficient faith or preparation, or both; and the sheikh hastened to stanch it. His thumb went first to his infallible tongue and then to the wounds; the flow ceased under the application, and other men took up the balls. Sometimes they drew blood and sometimes not; but all the wounds made were immediately closed by the sheikh and left only white scars. And these, like the other scars, whether you believe it or not, presently faded out of sight.

The next turn was that of a swordsman, whose feats were called the most severe of all. To help him the chanting devotees, now almost inarticulate and dropping, spurred themselves to further efforts, and the other leaping swordsman bounded softly to and fro along the front of the semicircle. This time the sheikh put his tongue out of his mouth, and while it hung there drew the whole length of a sword's edge up and down upon it; the point he placed in his mouth. Then the swordsman cut into the pit of his stomach by sawing the edge of the curved scimitar furiously against it horizontally. The width of the blade disappeared, and still he went on sawing. Enough having been done, the blade was taken from what looked like a horizontal, bloodless wound; and again the sheikh closed it with his thumb. After this display the man handed us the sword for examination. Its edge was sharp, but not of razor keenness, and no blood was on the blade. His wound remained now as a white line with red edges, which, when I looked

again half an hour later, I could not see it at a little distance.

In the semicircle was a man who from the first had drawn attention. He was an Armenian, lately turned Moslem and dervish. He had all the extreme fervour of a convert: his voice was the loudest, his movements the most violent, his face the most distorted, and he looked the most exhausted. He now came forward to do something with a sword, that seeming to be the implement of most honour. He proposed a feat for himself that should surpass the others, — no less than to fall upon the sword, or at least to lean upon its point. He leant forward heavily upon it, the hilt placed upon the floor, and several inches of the blade disappeared. This was not enough, and the sheikh, a man getting on for thirteen stone, clambered on the bent back of the devotee, stood upright upon it, and, finally, took to jumping while up there. To steady him in this position, he held the outstretched hand of one of his servers. Meanwhile the Armenian seemed to be supported as much by the sword as by his legs, and each moment I looked to see the point come out of his back. But that was not to be. The sheikh got down, and the sword was taken out; but there followed more blood from this wound than from any other, and the Armenian fell to the ground senseless. Now for the first time there was the impression that something out of the common had happened. The sheikh's efforts to stop the bleeding did not appear successful at first; the two servers became flurried; and the swordsmen came up to help. The semicircle, however, went on chanting as if something depended thereon. At last the sheikh knelt over the body for a few minutes, as if praying, while those about him formed a screen. When he rose the Armenian rose also, and the bleeding had ceased; but he was still weak and exceedingly pale. In a chair, however, he seemed to recover strength, and was walking about before the evening closed. After this scene the doings of men who ate pieces of live charcoal from a brazier fell somewhat flat— that at least we had seen done before.

It was nearing midnight when all was over. In the bazaar the next morning I recognised one of those who had used the spiked balls on the previous evening. He now appeared as an open-faced youngster of eighteen or nineteen, with a smile that he could not suppress. He said he worked in the iron bazaar hard by, making rough hinges and other ironwork. And while he stood there smiling and ingenuous, it needed an effort of mind to think of him as a fanatical dervish of the previous night's scene.

STOKES'S ACT.

"An offender when in arrest is not to bear arms except by order of his C.O. or in an emergency."—*The King's Regulations.*

THE President of the Court and the Judge-Advocate stood in private colloquy in one of the deep traverse-like windows of the Hôtel de Ville overlooking the Place. A heavy rain was falling from a sullen sky, and the deserted square was a dancing sea of agitation as the raindrops smote the little pools between the cobbles and ricochetted with a multitudinous hiss. Now and again a gust of wind swept across, and the rain rattled against the windows. On the opposite side of the square one of the houses gaped curiously, with bedroom and parlour exposed to view, as though some one had snatched away the walls and laid the scene for one of those *Palais Royal* farces in which the characters pursue a complicated domestic intrigue on two floors at once. That house, with its bed exposed to the rain dripping from the open rafters, was indeed both farcical and indecent; it stood among its unscathed neighbours like a pariah. The rain was loud and insistent, but not so loud as to dull the distant thunder of the guns. The intermittent gusts of wind now and again interrupted its monotonous theme, but the intervals were as brief as they were violent, and in this polyphonic composition of rain, wind, and guns, the hissing of the raindrops came and went as in a fugue and with an inexpressible mournfulness.

Inside the room was a table covered with green baize, on which were methodically arranged in extended order a Bible, an inkstand, a sheaf of paper, and a copy of the 'Manual of Military Law.' Behind the table were seven chairs, and to the right and left of them stood two others. The seven chairs were for the members of the court; the chair on the extreme right was for the "prisoner's friend," that on the left awaited the Judge-Advocate. About five yards in front of the table, in the centre of an empty space, stood two more chairs turned towards it. Otherwise the room was as bare as a guard-room. And this austere meagreness gave it a certain dignity of its own as of a place where nothing was allowed to distract the mind from the serious business in hand. At the door stood an orderly with a red armlet bearing the imprint of the letters "M.P." in black.

"I have read the summary pretty carefully," the Judge-Advocate was saying, "and it seems to me a clear case. The charge is fully made out. And yet the curious thing is, the fellow has an excellent record, I believe."

"That proves nothing," said

the Colonel; "I've had a fellow in my battalion found sleeping at his post on sentry-go, a fellow I could have sworn by. And you know what the punishment for that is. It's these night attacks; the men must not sleep by night and some of them cannot sleep by day, and there are limits to human nature. We've no reserves to speak of as yet, and the men are only relieved once in three weeks. Their feet are always wet, and their circulation goes all wrong. It's the puttees perhaps. And if your circulation goes wrong you can't sleep when you want to, till at last you sleep when you don't want to. Or else your nerves go wrong. I've seen a man jump like a rabbit when I've come up behind him."

"Yes," mused the Judge-Advocate, "I know. But hard cases make bad law."

"Yes, and bad law makes hard cases. Between you and me, our military law is a bit prehistoric. You're a lawyer and know more about it than I do. But isn't there something for civilians called a First Offenders Act? Bind 'em over to come up for judgment if called on—that kind of thing. Gives a man another chance. Why not the soldier too?"

"Yes," replied the Judge-Advocate, "there is. I believe the War Office have been talking about adopting it for years. But this is not the time of day to make changes of that kind. Everybody's worked off his head."

Eight officers had entered the room at intervals, the subalterns a little ahead of their seniors in point of time, as is the first duty of a subaltern whether on parade or at a "general," and having saluted the President in the window, they stood conversing in low tones.

The Colonel suddenly glanced at his left wrist, walked to the middle chair behind the table, and taking his seat said, "Now gentlemen, carry on, please!" As they took their places the Colonel, as President of the Court, ordered the prisoner to be brought in. There was a shuffle of feet outside, and a soldier without cap or belt or arms, and with a sergeant's stripes upon his sleeve, was marched in under a sergeant's escort. His face was not unpleasing—the eyes well apart and direct in their gaze, the forehead square, and the contours of the mouth firm and well-cut. The two took their places in front of the chair, and stood to attention. The prisoner gazed fixedly at the letters "R.F.," which flanked the arms of the Republic on the wall above the President's head, and stood as motionless as on parade. A close observer, however, would have noticed that his thumb and forefinger plucked nervously at the seam of his trousers, and that his hands, though held at attention, were never quite still. The escort kept his head covered.

At the President's order to "bring in the evidence," the soldier on duty at the door vanished, to return with a squad of seven soldiers in

charge of a sergeant, who formed them up in two ranks behind the prisoner and his escort. And they also stood exceeding still.

The President read the order convening the court, and as he recited each officer's name and regiment, the owner acknowledged it with "Here, sir." When he came to the prisoner's name he looked up and said, "Is that your name and number?" The escort nudged the prisoner, who recalled his attention from the wall with an immense effort and said, "Yes, sir."

"Captain Herbert appears as prosecutor and takes his place." As the ritual prescribed by the Red Book was religiously gone through, the prisoner continued to stare at the wall above the President's head, and the rain rattled against the window-panes with intermittent violence. Having finished his recital, the President rose, and with him all the members of the court rose also. He took a Bible in his hand and faced the Judge-Advocate, who exhorted him that he should "well and truly try the accused before the court according to the evidence," and that he would duly administer justice according to the Army Act now in force, without partiality, favour, or affection. . . . "So help you God." As the colonel raised the book to his lips he chanted the antiphon "So help me God." And the Judge-Advocate proceeded to swear the other members of the court, individually or collectively, three subalterns who were jointly and severally sworn holding the book together with a quaint solemnity, as though they were singing hymns at church out of a common hymn-book. Then the Judge-Advocate was in turn sworn by the President with his own peculiar oath of office, and did faithfully and with great earnestness promise that he would neither divulge the sentence, nor disclose, nor discover any votes or opinions as to the same. Which being done, and the President having ordered the military policeman to march out the evidence, the sergeant in charge cried, "Left turn. Quick march. Left wheel," and the little cloud of witnesses vanished through the doorway.

The President proceeded to read the charge-sheet:—

> "*The accused, No.* , *Sergeant John Stokes, 2nd Battalion Downshire Regiment, is charged with Misbehaving before the enemy in such a manner as to show cowardice, in that he at* , *on October 3rd* 1914, *when on patrol, and when under the enemy's fire, did run away.*"

All this time the prisoner had been studying the wall, his eyes travelling from the right to the left of the frieze, and then from the left to the right again. It was noticeable that his lips moved slightly at each stage of this laborious visual journey. "Forty-seven." "Forty-nine." "Forty-eight." Stokes was immensely interested in that compelling

frieze. He counted and recounted the number of figures in the Greek fret with painful iteration. Apparently he was satisfied at last, and then his eyes began to study the inkstand in front of the President. The President seemed an enormous distance away, but the inkstand very near and very large, and he found himself wondering why it was round, why it wasn't square, or hexagonal, or elliptic. Then he speculated whether the ink was blue or black, or red, and why people never used green or yellow. His brain had gone through all the colours of the spectrum when a pull at his sleeve by the escort attracted his attention. Apparently the colonel was saying something to him.

"Do you plead guilty or not guilty?"

The prisoner stared, but said nothing. The escort again pulled his sleeve as the colonel repeated the question.

Stokes cleared his throat, and looking his interlocutor straight in the face, said, "Guilty, sir." The members of the court looked at each other, the Colonel whispered to the Judge-Advocate, the Judge-Advocate to the Prosecutor. The Judge-Advocate turned to the prisoner, "Do you realise," he asked, not unkindly, "that if you plead 'Guilty' you will not be able to call any evidence as to extenuating circumstances?" The prisoner pondered for a moment; it seemed to him that the Judge-Advocate's voice was almost persuasive.

"Well, I'll say 'not guilty,' sir."

He now saw the President quite close to him; that monstrous inkstand had diminished to its natural size. Nothing was to be heard beyond the hissing of the rain but the scratching of the Judge-Advocate's quill, as he slowly dictated to himself the words, "The—prisoner—pleads—'not guilty.'" But why they had asked him a question which could only admit of one answer and then persuaded him to give the wrong one, was a thing that both puzzled and distressed John Stokes. Why all this solemn ritual, he speculated painfully; he was surely as good as dead already. He found himself wondering whether the sentence of the court would be carried out in the presence of only the firing party, or whether the whole of his battalion would be paraded. And he fell to wondering whether he would be reported in the casualty lists as "killed in action," or would it be "missing"? And would they send his wife his identity-disc, as they did with those who had fallen honourably on the field? All these questions both interested and perplexed him, but the proceedings of the Court he regarded little, or not at all.

Meanwhile the Prosecutor was unfolding the charge in a clear, even voice, neither extenuating nor setting down aught in malice. In a court-martial no Prosecutor ever "presses" the charge; he may even alleviate it. Which

shows that Assizes and Sessions have something to learn from courts-martial. The case was simple. Prisoner had gone out on the night of the 3rd with a patrol commanded by a subaltern. An alarm was raised, and he and the greater part of the patrol had run back to the trenches, leaving the officer to stand his ground, and to return later with his left arm shattered by a German bullet.

All this Stokes remembered but too well, though it seemed to have happened an immense time ago. He remembered how the subaltern had warned him that the only thing to do when a German flare lit up the night was to stand quite still. And he had not stood still, for one of the most difficult things for a man to believe is that to see suddenly is not the same thing as being seen; he had ducked, and as he moved something seared his right cheek like red-hot iron, and then—but why recall that shameful moment? A paradoxical psychologist in a learned essay on "the Expression of Emotion" has argued gravely that the "expression" precedes the emotion, that a man doesn't run because he is afraid but is afraid because he runs. Sergeant Stokes had never heard of psychology, but to this day he believes that it was his first start that was his undoing. He had begun to run without knowing why, until he knew why he ran—he was afraid. Yes, that was it. He had had, in Army vernacular, "cold feet." But why he ran in the first instance he did not know. It was true he hadn't slept for nearly three weeks, and that his duty as N.C.O. to go round every half hour during the night to watch the men and stare at that inscrutable field, and to post and relieve, had made him very jumpy. And then a young subaltern had died in his arms the day before that fatal night—he could see the grey film glistening on his face like a clouded glass. How queer he had felt afterwards. But what had that to do with the charge? Nothing at all.

And while the prisoner pondered on these things he was recalled by the voice of the President. Did he wish to ask the witness any questions? His company commander had been giving evidence. No; he had no questions to ask. And as each witness was called, and sworn, and gave evidence, all of which the Judge-Advocate repeated like a litany and duly wrote down with his own hand—the prisoner always returned the same answer.

Now the prisoner's friend, a young officer who had never played that *rôle* before, and who was both nervous and conscientious, had been studying Rule 40 in the Red Book with furtive concentration. What was he to do with a prisoner who neither elected to make a statement nor to put questions to witnesses, and who never gave him any lead? But he had there read something about calling witnesses as to character, and, reading, recollected that the company commander had glanced at the prisoner with

genuine commiseration. And so he persuaded Stokes, after some parley, to call the captain to give evidence as to character. The captain's words were few and weighty. The prisoner, he testified, was one of the best N.C.O.'s in his company, and, with the latitude which is characteristic of court-martial proceedings, the captain went on to tell of the testimony borne by the dead subaltern to the excellent character of John Stokes, and how the said John Stokes had been greatly affected by the death of the subaltern. And for the first time John Stokes hung his head. But beyond that and the quivering of his eyelashes he made no sign.

And it being a clear case the Judge-Advocate, as a Judge-Advocate may do, elected not to sum up, and the prisoner was taken to the place from whence he came. And the court proceeded to consider their finding and sentence, which finding and sentence, being signed by the President and the Judge-Advocate, duly went its appointed way to the Confirming Authority and there remained. For the General in Chief command in the field was hard pressed with other and weightier matters, having reason to believe that he would have to meet an attack of three Army Corps on a front of eight miles with only one Division. Which belief turned out to be true, and had for Sergeant John Stokes momentous consequences, as you shall hear.

II.

When John Stokes found himself once more in charge of a platoon he was greatly puzzled. He had been suddenly given back his arms and his belt, which no prisoner, whether in close or open arrest, is supposed to wear, and his guard had gone with him. He knew nothing about Paragraph 482 of the King's Regulations which contemplates "emergencies"; still less did he know that an emergency had arisen — such an emergency as will cast lustre upon British arms to the end of time. But that strange things were happening ahead he knew full well, for his new unit was as oddly made up as Falstaff's army: gunners, cooks, and A.S.C. drivers were all lumped together to make a company. Some carried their rifles at the slope and some at the trail, some had bayonets and some had not, certain details from the Rifle Brigade marched with their own quick trot, and some wore spurs.

Of one thing he was thankful: his old battalion, wherever they were, were not there. And the company commander coming along and perceiving the stripes on his sleeve, had, without further inquiry, put him in charge of a platoon, and thereafter he lost sight of his guard altogether.

He knew nothing of where

he was. Few soldiers at the Front ever do: they will be billeted in a village for a week and not know so much as the name of it. But that big business was afoot was evident to him, for they were marching in column of route almost at the double, under a faint moon and in absolute silence—the word having gone forth that there was to be no smoking or talking in the ranks.

Not a sound was to be heard, except the whisper of the poplars and the tramp of the men's feet upon the *pavé*. The road was so greasy with mud that it might have been beeswaxed, and Stokes's boots, the nails of which had been worn down, kept slipping as on a parquet floor. As they passed through the mean little villages not a light was to be seen; even the *estaminets* were shut, but now and again a dog barked mournfully at its chain. Once a whispered command was given at the head of the column, which halted so suddenly that the men behind almost fell upon the men in front, and then backed hastily; and these movements were automatically communicated all down the column, so that the sections of fours lurched like the trucks of a train which is suddenly pulled up. At that moment something flashed at the head of the column, and Stokes suddenly caught a glimpse of the faces of the captain and the subaltern in an aureole of light lit by the needle-like rays of an electric torch as they studied a map and compass.

But in no long time their ears told them they were nearing their destination, even as a traveller learns that he is nearing the sea. For they heard the crackle of musketry following upon the altercation of guns. All this passed as in a dream, and it seemed little more than a few minutes before Sergeant Stokes, having passed through a curtain of shrapnel, had his platoon extended in some shallow support trenches to which the remnants of the regiment whom they were called upon to stiffen had fallen back. It was a critical moment: our first trenches were in the hands of the enemy, and the whole line was sagging under the impact of the German hordes. Somehow that trench had to be recaptured — to be recaptured before the Germans had converted the parados into an invulnerable parapet and had constructed a nest of machine-guns to sweep with a cross-fire the right and left flank, where our line curved in like a gigantic horse-shoe. Of all this Sergeant Stokes knew as little as is usually given to one platoon to know on a front of eight miles.

As dawn broke and the stars paled the word came down the line, and in a series of short rushes, stooping somewhat in the attitude of a man who is climbing a very steep hill, they moved forward in extended order about eight or ten paces apart carrying their rifles with bayonets fixed. A hailstorm of lead greeted them, and all around him Sergeant Stokes

saw men falling, and as they fell lying in strange attitudes and uncouth—some stumbling (he had seen a hare shot in the back dragging its legs in just that way), others lying on their faces and clutching the earth convulsively as they drummed with their feet, and some very still. Overhead there was a sobbing and whimpering in the air. A little ahead to the left of him a machine-gun was tap-tapping like a telegraph instrument, and as it traversed the field of their advance the men went down in swathes.

If only he could get to that gun! On the right a low hedge ran at right angles to the German trench, and making for it he took such little cover as it afforded, and ran forward as he had never run before, not even on that night of baneful memory. His heart was thumping violently, there was a prodigious "stitch" in his side; and something warm was trickling down his forehead into his eyes and half blinding him, while in his ears the bullets buzzed like a swarm of infuriated bees. The next moment he was up against a little knot of grey-coated figures with toy-like helmets, he heard a word that sounded like "Himmel," and he had emptied his magazine and was savagely pointing with his bayonet, withdrawing, parrying, using the butt, his knees, his feet. He suddenly felt very faint. . . .

That is all that John Stokes remembers of the first battle of Ypres. For the next thing he knew was that a voice coming from an immense distance —just as he had once heard the voice of the dentist when he was coming to after a spell of gas—was saying something to him as he seemed to be rising, rising, rising ever more rapidly out of unfathomable depths, and then out of a mist of darkness a window, first opaque and then translucent, framed itself before his eyes, and he was staring at the sun. The voice, which was low and sweet — an excellent thing in woman — was saying, "Take this, sonny," and the air around him was impregnated with a faint odour of iodoform. Then he knew—he was in hospital.

III.

"Yes, a curious case," said one officer to the other as he sat in a certain room at Headquarters, staring abstractedly at the list of Field Ambulances and of their Chaplains attached to the wall. "A very curious case. It reminds me of something Smith said to me about bad law making hard cases. It was jolly lucky the findings of the court were held up all that time. If the C.-in-C. had confirmed them and the sentence had been promulgated, Stokes would now be doing five years at Woking. Whereas, there he is back with his old battalion, holding a D.C.M., and not reduced by one stripe."

"Not so curious as you think, my friend," replied the other. "Why, I saw forty men under arrest marching through H.Q. the other day singing — singing, mind you. There's hope for a man who sings. Of course, field punishment doesn't matter much; it is only a matter of a few days and a spell of fatigue duty. Though, mind you, I don't say that cleaning out latrines isn't pretty hard labour. But when it comes to breaking a man with a clean record because he has fallen asleep out of sheer weariness—well, what's the good of throwing men like that on the scrap-heap? Of course, you must try them, and you must sentence them, but you can give them another chance. You know Stokes's case fairly made us sit up, and we haven't let the grass grow under our feet. Look at that."

The Judge-Advocate read the blue document that was pushed across the table: "An Act to suspend the operation of sentences of Courts-martial." He studied the sections and sub-sections with the critical eye of a Parliamentary draughtsman. "Yes," he said, after some pertinent emendations, "it'll do. But the title is too long for common use at G.H.Q."

"Why!" said the other with a certain paternal sensitiveness, "what do you suggest?"

"I suggest," said the Judge-Advocate pensively,—"I suggest we call it Stokes's Act."

. . . . . .

Now this story has one merit —if it has no other. It is true. And as for the rest of the Act and its preamble, and its sections and its sub-sections, are they not written in the Statute Book? In the Temple they call it 5 & 6 Geo. V., cap. 23. But out there they call it "Stokes's Act."

J. H. MORGAN.

A DARDANELLES EXPLOIT.

BY ONE WHO TOOK PART IN IT.

THIS is the story of the submarine E 15. She went up the Dardanelles at daylight on the 17th April to endeavour to torpedo a Turkish ship at the Narrows, and the brother of her captain, who was on the Staff, went up as an observer in an aeroplane at the same time, as he wanted to see what his brother was able to do.

To his horror he saw E 15 run ashore in Kephez Bay, some miles this side of Chanak on the Asiatic shore. Later another aeroplane reported that the conning tower was closed, and a Turkish destroyer was standing by her, evidently with a view to salvage operations.

The Admiral was very anxious that she should not fall into the enemy's hands undamaged, so he gave orders for her to be destroyed if possible.

The conning tower and a little of the whale-back were showing above water. Submarine B 6 went up, but could not do anything as the current was so strong. She fired one torpedo, but could not see if she hit. That night two destroyers went up the Straits to attack E 15. They got fairly near her, but saw nothing to fire at. Aeroplanes also had endeavoured to drop bombs on her without success, being unable to come down close enough on account of the Turkish aerial guns.

Next morning B 11 (the famous submarine that dived under the mines some months ago and sank a Turkish ship) went up to try her luck, but came back and reported she could do nothing owing to fog.

In the afternoon the *Triumph* and *Majestic*, the two patrol battleships at the time, were ordered to enter the Straits and endeavour to destroy E 15 at long range, spotted by an aeroplane, but not to close inside the line of mine-swept area. Each ship fired her turret guns at 10,500 yards, but with only a target of a conning tower of a submarine at $5\frac{1}{4}$ miles, it was found impossible to hit. During this operation the *Triumph* was hit her twenty-third time by a howitzer, but no serious damage done.

Now five methods had been tried to destroy E 15, and had failed, viz.:—

(*a*) Aeroplanes dropping bombs.

(*b*) Submarine attempt by B 6.

(*c*) Destroyer attack.

(*d*) A second submarine attempt by B 11.

(*e*) Battleships firing at long range.

As a last resort the Admiral sent the following signal: "Two picket boats from *Triumph* and *Majestic* are to

attack E 15 to-night with torpedoes fitted to dropping gear. Lieut.-Commander E. G. Robinson of *Vengeance* will be in charge of operations. Only volunteer crews to be sent." This officer was ordered to take charge, as his ship had been on patrol at the time E 15 struck, and he knew exactly where she was.

You can imagine the order rather astonished us, as it was almost certain death to take small steam-boats right up under the enemy's guns, and into water every inch of which was covered by powerful searchlights.

The Captain of the *Triumph* said he would allow either X, myself, or Y (another R.N.R. officer) to volunteer, but we were under no obligation to go, as he did not think there was much chance of our coming back! X said he had too many responsibilities in England, so Y and myself were left, and both of us were, of course, as keen as mustard.

I was many years the senior, and therefore had the prior right, but I did not want to take an unfair advantage over Y, so offered to throw the dice, the best of three throws to win. We each won one throw amid some excitement in the mess, and then Y threw 4 tens, which I easily beat with 4 aces!!!

At 5 P.M. we hoisted out our picket boat, and fitted the dropping gear. We also placed a Maxim gun in the bow, rifles, ammunition, and a life-belt for each man. I was ordered to cut down the crew to the smallest possible number. Many men wanted to go; but I settled on two seamen gunners for the Maxim, four seamen torpedo men (two each side), one leading stoker, two stokers, and a torpedo petty officer to act as coxswain. So altogether we had one officer (myself) and ten men; also Lieut.-Commander Robinson, who was in command of both boats, and Midshipman Woolley, also from the *Vengeance*.

Whilst it was still light, the Captain kept about three miles outside the entrance, with our boat on the side of the ship away from the shore, so that the enemy, even with powerful glasses, could not have any idea of what was going on.

At 6 P.M. the weather looked very suitable—overcast, with a slight haze over the land, and indications of light rain; but later it cleared up, and became too fine for our liking.

At 10 P.M. the *Majestic's* boat arrived, with Lieutenant C. H. Godwin, R.N., in charge; and shortly after we pushed off, with my boat leading and the *Majestic's* following about 800 yards astern.

We steamed about eight knots, as the current was strong; and until we reached the beginning of the dangerous area we chatted—to keep our courage up, perhaps! As a matter of fact I wasn't in much of a funk, and felt fairly cool, for I have been under fire a good many times, and I recognised that I had got a chance that does not often come in a man's life.

It was a bit eerie though, steaming along in the pitch-dark, with all lights out in the boat, towards the distant searchlights, not knowing whether death or life awaited one.

The whole distance was about twelve miles from the ship, the last five being the really dangerous part. Up to there one's only danger was mines, and, as we only drew five feet, we hoped we would go over them all right, though it was quite on the cards we would bump a floating mine.

We kept nearly in the centre of the channel to avoid being spotted by the Suandere No. 7 searchlight, which was not a very high one. We had come along quite unobserved until we were abeam of it, passing the smaller searchlights without much trouble. Unfortunately the men stationed near the Suandere searchlight saw us and started off firing 6- or 12-pdr. shrapnel.

Thus the ball opened,—we still had three to four miles to go. We continued our way and approached the other searchlights. The alarm having been given, all the other searchlights came on and sent their beams searching round to pick us up, and as each beam struck us bang would go another gun. A few seconds later we would hear a ping as the projectile whizzed past us, or a sharp metallic crack as a shrapnel burst just over our heads.

Presently we arrived in the vicinity of the stranded submarine. By this time eight searchlights were trained on our boat, and we were being fired on from six directions. The noise of the guns and the splashes in the water and the powerful beams of the searchlights must have made an effective scene. Personally, however, I had not much time to consider the artistic side of it, as I was steaming zigzag courses to puzzle the gunners, gradually getting nearer to the place where we thought E 15 was. The *Majestic's* boat had been fired on, but not to such an extent, as we being the leading boat received at first most of the enemy's attention.

We saw a dark mass which we thought must be the submarine (there was no searchlight on it, so we could not make sure), and the order was given to fire one torpedo, which we did, but as we heard no explosion, concluded we had missed.

The current was very strong and rather like a whirlpool in Kephez Bay, so steering was very difficult, and it was an effort to keep one's head with the noise of guns all round us and the dazzle of the searchlights.

We steamed up a short distance and turned round intending to close again and fire our other torpedo, but suddenly saw the *Majestic's* boat in trouble and the crew calling out for help. It appeared that coming up behind us, and whilst the searchlights were focussed on us, one of the beams passed us and shone right on E 15, and the *Majestic's* boat was luckily only 200 yards away and saw it. Godwin im-

mediately fired one torpedo, which did not strike the object. At that moment his boat was struck by a shell under the water-line aft, and commenced to take in water rapidly. He gallantly turned his boat towards E 15 again, steamed in a bit, and fired his second torpedo, which caught E 15 just in front of the conning tower and on the forward whale-back of the hull, making a fine explosion. I consider this was a very brave deed, as Godwin knew he was in imminent danger of sinking, but ran in again to have a second shot.

When we saw them their stern-sheets were awash, and it looked as if they might have to swim for it. We manœuvred the boat to go alongside, but the current was terrible, and it made the handling a very difficult matter. The enemy saw the disaster and redoubled their efforts. The sea all round us was a mass of splashes from projectiles, some of them 15 to 20 feet high, whilst the water where the shrapnel burst was pitted as if by heavy rain. How it was we were not hit I cannot say — one would imagine it was impossible to come out of such an inferno. All I can say is that God preserved us, and not a shot actually hit, though we were one and all wet with the splashes. After some difficulty we got alongside the *Majestic's* boat, and they jumped on board. We were very delighted to hear that they had been successful and had done the job of torpedoing E 15.

As we steamed round again preparatory to heading out, we saw a man crawling out of the other boat's stern-sheets. He had been forgotten in the hurry of the moment. It looked like suicide to go back, but of course we could not leave him there, so manœuvred close again and shouted to him to get into the water and swim towards us, which he did, and we hauled him into the boat unconscious. Godwin, who looked after him, had him put down the forepeak, and it was found that his legs had been crushed through the explosion of the shell which struck the boat. He was the only man in the stern-sheets, and in the dark they overlooked him when it came to abandoning their boat.

By this time we thought we had better clear out, so turned our nose towards home and steamed away at half-speed, still under heavy fire. We did not like to go full-speed, as we thought it would shake up the wounded man too much.

The enemy evidently thought that there were men still on the sinking boat, as they kept their searchlights on her, and concentrated a heavy fire also. They must have wasted a few hundred rounds. This enabled us to steal away quietly, and, as there was about a 4-knot (or even more) current running, we soon got some distance away. We had steamed over two mine-fields to get to E 15.

Half-way down the Straits we fell in with a destroyer which had been ordered to stop there to support us, if necessary.

We reported what we had done, and then resumed our way out of the Straits. We first went to the *Majestic* on the outer southern line of patrol. When we got alongside her and asked for a doctor, he found that the wounded man was dead. The commander of the *Majestic*, with the true old Navy touch, instead of congratulating us all on the success of the expedition and his people on their lives being saved—only asked them if they had saved any of the boat's gear!!

Having put the party on board, and the dead man, we shoved off and tried to find the *Triumph*, which was about three miles away. At nighttime in war, when all lights are out and dead lights down, it is hard to see even a big ship. However, we found the *Triumph*, and arrived alongside at 3.10 A.M., having had an exciting time and an extremely interesting adventure. After hoisting my boat, in I went and reported myself to the Captain on the bridge, who was very nice about it all, and also said he had not expected to see us again.

Lieut.-Commander Robinson was in charge of the operations, and in my boat, and I carried on under him. To him the greatest credit is due, and I am glad to say he has been promoted to Commander for his gallantry displayed on this and several previous occasions.

As I write this on the 23rd, the Captain has sent me down a copy of the following signal, which has been received from the *Queen Elizabeth*:—

"The Vice-Admiral has just read with much pride the report of the torpedo attack on the wreck of E 15 by picket boats of *Triumph* and *Majestic*. He congratulates all those who took part in this gallant enterprise, and their success was of the greatest value. The names of the crews have been telegraphed to the Admiralty at their request."

ARTHUR B.-W.

THE ART OF ADVOCACY.

EVER since mankind began to "take notice," the question "how the thing is done" has greatly exercised human curiosity. "How does he do it?" has been asked alike about the juggler and the rhetorician, and numerous attempts have been made to answer it. What the instinct and the opportunity of imitation failed to supply has had to be made good by inference and speculation. Treatises have thus come to be written upon all forms of activity, from the art of war to the art of knurr-and-spell—that hobby of Mr Lang's hobby, the prophet Nicholas. Whether they have done much to promote efficiency in their several subjects may well indeed be doubted. It is true that all the great masters will be found to obey the rules, which is not to be wondered at considering that these "rules" are deduced and digested from no other source than the practice of the great masters themselves. It is Counsellor Crossmyloof who pleads,[1] and Mr Saddletree who, more or less intelligently, expounds his methods of pleading to a gaping world. But many a mediocre golfer, for example, has for the time being ruined what he is pleased to call "his game" by too slavish an observance of the precepts magisterially laid down by the fashionable champion of the hour. He has discarded old and faithful friends for outlandish-looking clubs which do not suit him; or, instead of giving free play to nature and obeying the dictates of his eye, such as it is, he has thrown his legs and body into contortions, or twisted his hands and fingers into knots, which, so far as effective action is concerned, have reduced him to the condition of a paralytic, and a deformed one at that. The truth is that Jack Bunsby was in the right of it, and that the bearing of all general maxims lies in their application. To the eternal conflict between theory and practice there can be in this world but one ending.

In no field of human exertion will these observations prove to be better founded than in that marked out for the Advocate. Legal biography is a fairly voluminous department of literature, and, upon the whole, is no less attractive than it is voluminous. A busy and prosperous lawyer must needs come across so many striking characters and so many curious incidents in the course of his professional career that it requires an exceptionally stupid person to make its record thoroughly dull. Yet the most expert legal biographer or autobiographer has never really be-

[1] We use the word "plead" throughout in its popular sense, signifying oral advocacy; not in its stricter sense of drawing papers.

trayed the secret of his hero's triumph, for that secret is incommunicable. We watch the progress of plain John Campbell's fee-book with bated breath, but we are never permitted to get at the heart of the mystery — to comprehend *why* it swells. The chronicler may extol his hero's prodigious industry, but he can never guarantee to others a like success. He may reckon up, drop by drop, his allowance of midnight oil, but he can never insure that an equal consumption of paraffin will be followed by equivalent results. He may draw a vivid sketch of John Scott stepping down into Clare Market of a Saturday night and buying sprats for his own and his Bessie's supper, but he can never predict with any certainty that for the neophyte who restricts himself to that modest diet there will arise another *Ackroyd* v. *Smithson*, and with it a chance of making his fortune by a fresh exposition of the doctrine of "conversion."

It is, however, equally certain that in no other branch of industry would a warmer welcome be "extended" (as the newspapers say in their inimitable dialect) to a really good handbook of directions, if such a thing were within the bounds of possibility. No words can exaggerate the sinking of heart, the sensation of abject helplessness, not far short of despair, with which a young counsel gets up to cross-examine his first witness in his first case. His client is probably on trial for omitting to take the elementary distinction between *meum* and *tuum* upon which all civil society depends: in other words, for inveigling a drunk man up a lane or close, and there forcibly depriving him of his watch and chain. The circumstances of the crime have been clearly and succinctly narrated by the active and intelligent member of the police force, whom it is now "up to" Mr Tiro to examine in cross. Tiro's mind is a perfect blank; no chink is visible to his, or indeed to anybody else's, eye in the armour of the prosecution. In vain does he recall the definitions he has heard of cross-examination, such as "to get hold of the end of a piece of string and keep gently pulling at it," which is probably the best of them. The requisite piece of string refuses to present itself to his nervous grasp; he stammers; he flounders; he clutches wildly at straws instead of string; and before he sits down (not without a plain indication from the judge that it is high time to do so) he has merely succeeded in eliciting that the precise *locus* of the robbery was illuminated by a gas-lamp of such dazzling brilliance that any suggestion of a mistake as to the identity of the prisoner is entirely out of the question. Or, it may be, Tiro, having been solemnly assured by his client that he may put a particular question to a particular witness with perfect safety, does so, and, of course, receives in reply, in place of the expected "yes" or "no," a

staggering "no" or "yes," which effectually seals his said client's fate for one while. In either case Tiro begins to suspect that he has mistaken his true vocation, and sighs for good, sound, *practical* guidance in the conduct of his profession, oblivious of the fact that the odds were ten thousand to one against his client's acquittal, and that not even a Demosthenes or a Cicero, a Scarlett or a Russell, could have brought him or them off.

It is this demand which was plainly sought to be met by the late Mr Richard Harris, K.C., the medium, if we mistake not, through whom the late Lord Brampton chose to communicate to the public his disappointing memoirs. To judge from the number of editions which his little books[1] have gone through, his efforts appear to have met with a considerable share of approbation. We are far from saying that such a reward was unmerited, for there is plenty of shrewd sense in Mr Harris's remarks, and he fortifies his opinions by a number of more or less apt and amusing illustrations. If he seldom soars very high above the obvious and the commonplace, and if the novice who has the root of the matter in him can learn comparatively little from either his recommendations or his warnings, yet everyday experience shows that there are practitioners not a few who would have done well to lend an attentive ear to his teaching in their callow youth. At an early stage they picked up bad habits, which have become inveterate with advancing years; and they continue to earn a moderate and steadily diminishing income by perpetrating, with laudable persistency, the solecisms and blunders in which the solicitors who instruct them take delight.

That is excellent advice which Mr Harris gives, not to think it necessary to cross-examine *every* hostile witness, nor to cross-examine at the utmost possible length. Ten to one, your solicitor will be ill-pleased if you follow it; but no matter. Nor is the reminder by any means amiss that "cross-examination does not consist in repeating in a louder tone the examination in chief." To the cautions against making grimaces and against putting questions at your solicitor's instigation without being sure of the answer, he might have added another against repeating word for word the witnesses' answers. It is an irritating practice, easy to drop into and difficult to shake off. Its only justification would be the improbable hypothesis that judge and jury are afflicted with deafness, but its real object seems to be to gain a little time in which to frame the next question. Now, a man will never be a great

[1] Hints on Advocacy. By Richard Harris, Esq. Fourteenth edition. Stevens & Sons, Ltd. 1911.

Illustrations in Advocacy. By the Same. Fifth edition. With Foreword, &c., by George Elliott, K.C. Stevens & Haynes. 1915.

cross-examiner who cannot afford to be independent of such illegitimate breathing spaces: they give the witness in the box as well the opportunity of collecting his wits. As Lord Brampton put it, "A man must learn to think '*on his legs.*'" Again, Mr Harris does well to insist that questions, whether in chief or in cross, should be formulated in the shortest possible form and the simplest possible words. Learned counsel is not to usurp another's privilege and roll two or more interrogatories into one. He must not build upon the model of a famous question in Mr Calverley's examination paper on 'Pickwick.' Neither must he enquire, after the manner of the bard,

> "What Hebe fills what mighty bowl,
> Mantling with what immortal drink?"

Yet the question has been known to be put (not without appropriate comment from the Bench), "On the evening of the 1st of April, at what o'clock were you going where?" It is right to explain that the ingenious author of this enquiry did not enjoy a very large practice, and was, in fact, of a quite singular incompetence.

Mr Harris warns those whom it may concern against speaking too fast. Yet there is no rule without its exceptions, and two of the ablest and most brilliant counsel we have ever known were incredibly rapid speakers, easily exceeding the high rate of two hundred words a minute. One of them never by any chance finished a sentence upon the scheme he had originally laid down for it: a *verbatim* report of his speeches would have been an incoherent assemblage of words. The other, on the contrary, rarely failed to complete a sentence, extricating himself with amazing sagacity from a perfect labyrinth of qualifications and parentheses. Speed, then, is not necessarily inconsistent with distinctness of utterance, upon which Mr Harris lays a just stress. Mumbling ought to be left to the Bench, and generally is. For one indistinct speaker at the Bar there are at least a hundred in the pulpit or at the reading-desk. Very salutary too is Mr Harris's *caveat* against fine language, which he pronounces to be "never so powerful and effective as good well-chosen homely words." The Wordsworthian canon for the choice of a poetical vocabulary, which the immortal stampmaster himself so flagrantly and systematically violated, is much more trustworthy in regard to forensic oratory. And the employment of everyday language has the important result that it removes one of the temptations which beset counsel to put his case too high. Nothing is more forcible than moderation, or at all events than seeming moderation; and of this one of the best illustrations will be found in the report of the "cognition" of David Yoolow on a brieve of idiotry in 1837—a process which reproduced in a very striking manner many

of the features of Galt's account of the cognition of Wattie Walkinshaw in 'The Entail.' The next of kin of the alleged fatuous person had led their evidence, and presented the jury with a truly lamentable picture of his corporeal and mental condition. An inexperienced junior in opening for Yoolow might well have been betrayed into a fatal error. He might have drawn another picture of his client, depicting him as rather more handsome and intelligent, if possible, than (say) the average juryman. Mr Neaves knew better than that. He portrayed in even more lurid colours than his opponent had done the physical defects of the idiot, and prepared the jury for much that was repulsive in his appearance and uncouth in his demeanour, reminding them at the same time that within yonder distorted frame, which had lost almost the semblance of humanity, there might yet lurk unextinguished a spark of that intelligence which the Creator had implanted in every breast, and so on. The consequence was that, when the jury visited Yoolow at his house, they were agreeably surprised. They discovered that he was a long way from being so bad in externals as his own counsel had painted him; and very naturally reached the conclusion that neither was he so defective in the intellectuals as the other side had represented him to be.

Mr Elliott also draws attention in his introductory remarks to the 'Illustrations' to the decay of "eloquence" at the bar; and there can be no doubt that within the last two generations a heavy "slump" has taken place in the commodity euphemistically so termed. The newest hand now thinks twice before he attempts to overawe a jury with the prospect of what their feelings will be when they appear before "the great White Throne" if they dare to hang his client. The disappearance of eloquence is not to be regretted. Though many of the finest examples of oratory are in the forensic kind, it must be owned that the larger proportion of legal eloquence has been sad stuff. Much of the extant oratory of pleaders who in their day enjoyed the highest reputation, leaves the reader cold, if not bored. Take Thomas Erskine. His success with juries is undeniable. To listen to contemporary testimony, you would think that a greater master of the art of advocacy never existed. Mr Harris quotes a passage from Lord Campbell's 'Lives of the Lord Chancellors':

> "Erskine rose a little after midnight, and not only instantly dispelled all feeling of exhaustion and lassitude from the minds of the jury, the judges, and the bystanders, but while he spoke, they seemed all to be inspired with a new ethereal existence, and they listened as if addressed by some pure intelligence of heaven, who had appeared to instruct them."

If the Archangel Gabriel had descended into court to address the jury, the enthusiastic biographer could scarce

have said more. But, turn to the reports of the trials, and you find this "pure intelligence of heaven" discharging a copious flow of turgid claptrap, of Corinthian rhodomontade; not to mention that, in the *crim. con.* cases, which were the pure intelligence's "strong suit" (so to speak), the torrent exhales a rank and disagreeable effluvium peculiarly its own. Our firm impression is, that in all the nobler functions of an advocate Thomas could not for one instant compare with his brother Harry. It was not by such means that Scarlett established his unique reputation as a verdict-getter. Rather was it by quietly persuading the jury that his client had "the right end of the stick." Nor is there any hint of the Erskine touch (we mean as regards "eloquence") in Sir Alexander Cockburn's reply for the Crown in the Rugeley poisoning case—a performance superior even to his opening, to an analysis of which Mr Harris devotes an interesting chapter. It is in truth a masterpiece: brief and concentrated, considering the multiplicity of facts with which it deals, yet omitting nothing relevant; bare of all "frills" and ornament, yet only the more deadly on that account; demolishing the flimsy fabric of the defence with a remorseless and unfaltering logic; and driving home the evidence for the prosecution in its proper sequence in English which the lady's-maid in the play might describe as "so pure and so crips." Withal there is that entire absence of the note of personal animosity—that scrupulous abstinence from pressing anything unduly against the accused—which has for long been the tradition of the public prosecutor's office in this fortunate island.

Many of his most pertinent and illuminating instances are drawn by Mr Harris from the Tichborne litigations, more especially from the trial of the Claimant at bar. Nor is this surprising, for his hero and patron, Mr Hawkins, reaped a rich harvest of honour and glory in the latter. Among a thousand features of lesser significance there are two points about these astonishing cases which are worth pausing to advert to. In the first place, they constitute a sort of synoptical nightmare of the works of Charles Dickens. To say nothing of Wagga-Wagga, the very names of Baigent and Bogle, of Tredgett and Bulpit, of Jury and Nangle, at once bring you into the enchanted circle. Who could have believed that they existed outside the pages of "Boz"? And when it is added that their owners acted up to them, and behaved precisely as they would have done had they stepped out of 'Martin Chuzzlewit' or 'Little Dorrit,' no further proof can surely be required of the proposition that Dickens was a "realist" of the most austere school, whose photographic accuracy in reproducing the characteristics of his fellowmen never deviated to the extent of a single hair's breadth into romance on the

one hand or into caricature on the other. In the second place, the Tichborne trials constitute a complete epitome of practice, indicating with unmistakable emphasis "how to do it" and also "how not to do it." In the civil case, we have, on the one side, the spectacle of a clever man overreaching himself from sheer vanity and want of mental ballast; for no one can pretend that Sir John Coleridge's cross-examination of the plaintiff, with its well-remembered catch-word, "Would you be surprised to hear?" was other than a monument of diffuseness and fatuity. On the other side, we have the glaring superficiality of Serjeant Ballantine, but for which the Claimant might quite conceivably have snatched a temporary triumph. In the criminal trial again, we have the work of Mr Hawkins, at once so solid and so brilliant; for his cross-examination of the defendant's witnesses has never been surpassed, and furnishes a model over which all young practitioners would do well to pore. The questions are all put in a few clear, sharply cut words, and they follow each other without a moment's pause, offering no indication to an untruthful witness (and most of the Claimant's witnesses *were* untruthful) upon which horn of a prospective dilemma it will be less painful for him to be impaled. Whichever course he decides to pursue, whether he answers in the affirmative or in the negative, Mr Hawkins is ready for him, eager to pounce, and to follow that question up with another which shall confront the victim with the same momentous problem. Finally, we have in the conduct of the defence an exhibition, upon a one-inch scale, of every possible fault which it is possible to commit in advocacy, from ignoring the true issue (the *constitutio causæ*, as Cicero would call it) to insulting the presiding judge. Human perversity and wrong-headedness were assuredly never carried to such prodigious lengths on this side insanity.

Wit and humour are, no question, "a great set-off" to an advocate's speech. What says Tully? "Suavis autem est et vehementer sæpe utilis jocus et facetiæ";[1] and the exposition of the subject which he puts into the mouth of C. Julius Cæsar Strabo Vopiscus[2] not only says most things that are worth saying on that topic, but throws a flood of interesting light upon the idea of a joke current in the highest legal circles in ancient Rome. A few of the specimens with which Cæsar intersperses his discourse are excellent; but many of them rise no higher than the modern standard of legal facetiousness; and some would now be considered "impossible." That the ancients in political controversy allowed themselves a licence far exceeding the bounds of modern taste is notorious. Their want of some such institution as the

[1] De Oratore, ii. 54. 216.

[2] Ib., 217-290.

duello has been held to account for it. And so in their courts of law, the privilege of counsel, as known to us, stretched to its utmost limit, would fall a long way short of the point to which a Roman pleader might carry his invective. If the litigant against whom he was appearing happened to be distasteful to him on any account —and political feeling ran very high in the last century of the Republic—there was nothing which he did not feel entitled to rake up against him, and not against him only, but also against his relations and friends. Even his mother-in-law was not immune from attack, and there was no ground of accusation which apparently told more heavily against a party with a Roman jury than that he had wasted his patrimony in unfortunate speculations or riotous living. That such billingsgate, however well deserved, was derogatory to the self-respect of him who indulged in it was indeed occasionally felt. When Crassus was pleading against Scævola in the Centumvirs' court he merely "chaffed" him: "parcebat enim adversarii dignitati, in quo ipse conservabat suam." But when he spoke on behalf of Plancius against his accuser Brutus, "quem oderat et quem dignum contumelia judicabat," he fought with the gloves off; he not only rallied him but also insulted him; "utroque genere pugnavit."[1] It is scarcely possible to figure a case in this country in which such virulence would not defeat its own ends. Banter and ridicule, however, if well placed, may be highly effective with a jury, as Mr Hawkins showed in *R.* v. *Castro;* and yet it is to be observed that he used these arts but sparingly. Forensic and judicial wit is not to be expected to produce a startling scintillation; and even the best examples depend for their success in the ear of the listener very largely upon the place and time. Like certain Acts of Parliament, they are "local and personal." Collections of legal anecdotes are apt to make rather dismal reading, and the authenticity of some of the best is dubious.[2] Happy, say we, is the judge or the magistrate, or the barrister, born with the gift of making harmless jests, who escapes the attention of the evening papers! He will best succeed in doing so who bears in mind the Ciceronian maxim: "Ne quotienscumque potuerit dictum dici necesse habeamus dicere."[3]

The grand defect of Mr Harris's 'Hints,' as our readers have probably surmised, is that he has not a syllable to offer about the higher walks of the art on which he professes to advise. *Nisi prius* monopolises his im-

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[1] De Oratore, ii. 54. 221; 55. 222.

[2] Mr Elwin, for example, contumeliously explodes the practical joke played upon James Boswell by his comrades of the bar-mess at Lancaster Assizes—one of the most entertaining of such stories.

[3] De Oratore, ii. 60. 244.

agination, nor of the more subtle and exacting developments of the game has he any notion. He probably despised the Court of Chancery, and would have stared to be told of a portion of Great Britain not four hundred miles from the Palace of Justice in the Strand, where questions of fact are for the most part determined by a judge without the assistance of a jury. Yet the difference between addressing a jury and a judge has always been recognised. If you want to appeal to the one, you must convince his intelligence; if you want to appeal to the other, you must excite their passions. Such is the broad distinction drawn by Cicero. Not that there have not been periods and places in which the two sorts of judicatory have approximated in character and temperament. Before the Court of Session was divided, the style of pleading before "the Fifteen" seems to have savoured more of a jury-speech than does an argument before the Division at the present day. So much we infer from Alan Fairford's celebrated appearance in *MP. Peebles* v. *Plainstanes*. And there is one Court of this country to-day, by many times more numerous in its membership than any other, which combines in a remarkable degree the characteristics of both species of tribunal. It is final, within its own sphere, alike in fact and in law. It is liable from its numbers to be swept by gusts of prejudice and passion. Yet it is subject to powerful restraining influences arising out of training and vocation. Also, it is fortunate in having at its disposal highly-skilled expert guidance. We refer, of course, to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Now, doubtless the same fundamental maxims hold good for the corresponding kinds of legal oratory. Among these is Cicero's maxim: "Quascumque causas erit tractaturus, ut eas diligenter penitusque cognoscat."[1] The most ambitious of youngsters will make nothing of it unless he has read, and re-read, and read yet again, his papers. Similarly it is among the fundamentals that counsel must not pervert the truth. He must rest content with "creating an atmosphere," an operation calling for the exercise of no little delicacy of touch, and one which is often of great service, particularly in cases where the facts hover on the border-line of fraud. But he must on no account tell a lie, or categorically mislead the Court. An advocate who is suspect — who is reputed, whether by the Bench or by his professional brethren, not to "run straight" — has deliberately sacrificed half his usefulness as a counsel. "You *say* so, Mr Sneckdrawer; but where do you find *that?*" is hardly the sort of comment which a young man desirous

[1] De Oratore, ii. 24. 99.

of getting on at the Bar would willingly provoke from the Bench. Also, both with judge and jury, it is imperative that the advocate should keep his head and keep his temper. But these generalities once granted, there comes the parting of the ways.

In volunteering advice to David Deans as to the selection of counsel for his unhappy daughter, Bartoline Saddletree remarks of the auld laird of Cuffabout that "he whiles thumps the dust out of a case gey and weel." But merely to thump the dust out of a case gey and weel will not do for a full-dress debate. Something more than "contentio actionis" is required, though vigour may not be out of place if backed up by other qualities. If young counsel could only be brought to believe it, what a judge is thirsting for all the time is "assistance." He feels the difficulty of the case, and he is grateful to any one who will help him to untie the knot, which is precisely the purpose for which counsel are there. The thanks which counsel sometimes receive at the end of a speech are never insincere. Now, if this important function of rendering assistance is to be discharged, an argument must be presented at many different angles and in many different lights. Cicero, indeed, seems to have thought that an argument once stated may be left alone: "Simul atque emissum est adhaerescit."[1] It is only an appeal to the emotions which calls for "multa et varia et copiosa oratio." But this seems to be a great mistake. The wonderful thing about a woman is the number of times she can say the same thing in the same words. The wonderful thing about a great advocate is the number of times he can say the same thing in different words. To be able to do this without a flagrant waste of the time of the Court requires a highly sensitive and apprehensive mind. The advocate must be familiar with the current of judicial opinion; he must feel by a sort of instinct what is being thought about the matter in hand in judicial circles. There is no calling in which it is more essential for the practitioner to be alert and up to date, which is as much as to say that the law is a living and not a dead thing. The conventional lawyer of fiction is always depicted as buried in "musty tomes," thick with the dust of ages. Musty tomes have their most important uses, and it were well if they were sometimes more diligently handled. But they must be approached through the avenue of the latest issue of the reports, and the sting of Mr Round's jibe lies in its partial truth, that what historians are in search of is evidence, the older the better, what lawyers are in search of is authority, the newer the better.

There are two great schools

[1] De Oratore, ii. 53. 214.

of pleading in its higher flights, of which for convenience sake the one may be termed the ratiocinative, the other the histrionic. We will take Mr A as a leading representative of the former, and Mr B of the latter. Mr A, then, when his line has been chosen after the most anxious deliberation, jettisons everything not strictly relevant. Nothing impertinent is permitted to disturb his conduct of the case. He develops his attack in a series of articulate propositions, which are elaborated one after the other in their logical order. His argument thus advances with measured and unerring steps towards its appointed goal, gathering strength at every stage, and, as may be supposed, the cumulative effect of the whole is overwhelming. Regarded as a display of the reasoning powers at their very highest, Mr A's method cannot be surpassed. The drawback to it is that, while it works splendidly when Mr A has a good, or even a tolerably good, case, it is apt to break down when he has a bad one. For Mr A is but an indifferent dissembler; he is manifestly ill at ease when a gap in his logical chain has to be covered up; and you can generally tell when the arguments he puts forward fail to command the approval of his intellectual conscience. Some day he will make an even greater judge than he is an advocate.

Mr B, on the other hand, is the most copious, urbane, and persuasive of men. He does little in the way of elimination; everything goes into his case on the off-chance of its proving serviceable. He has a fly in his book to drop over the nose of every occupant of the Bench. It is not for him to discriminate invidiously between the intrinsic merits and attractions of a Jock Scott and a Silver Doctor. Mr B's method has this to be said for it, that Judges have their foibles and prejudices like other human beings. This one is prone to believe all trustees to be fraudulent and all liquidators knaves; that one to plume himself upon discovering a short cut to the justice of a cause without trudging along the dusty roads of the law. Counsel would be doing less than their duty to their clients if they did not take advantage of these and the like idiosyncrasies. But the great feature which Mr A and Mr B have in common (however dissimilar they may be in temperament and constitution) is that, when you hear them speak, you feel satisfied that their contentions are the very perfection of reasonableness and common-sense: which, after all, is the one thing needful.

We do not propose to say much on the casuistry of advocacy, or to bring up the inevitable Courvoisier once more from the silent tomb. All are agreed that an advocate should *appear* to think that he has a good case; and all are equally agreed that he must on no account *say* that he thinks so. The example of Serjeant Shee in Palmer's case and of Lord

Advocate Moncreiff and Mr Inglis in Madeleine Smith's ought on no account to be followed.

"Any indication of his personal opinion, any expression of his belief in the honesty or validity of his client's case, is a distinct departure from the advocate's duty." He is "usurping a function which does not belong to him if he assumes the duty of a judge."

These are the weighty words of Lord Herschell.[1] But, in point of fact, the dilemma assumed to exist rarely arises, for in nine cases out of ten the advocate contrives to work himself up into a conviction that his client is in the right, and that he himself was in the right when he persuaded him to go to law. It must always, however, be remembered, Lord Herschell proceeds:

"that it is only when he is advocating a client's cause professionally in a court of justice that an advocate is entitled to use the best arguments that can be devised without reference to his own opinion as to their soundness;" and he admits the existence of "a suspicion that in political life this rule has not always been rigidly adhered to by lawyers."

To touch on this point is to embark upon a lively controversy. Lawyers are no worse than other people, is the lawyer's most obvious retort. "I ken mair than ae advocate," says our friend Bartoline, "that may be said to have some integrity as weel as their neighbours, that is, after a sort o' fashion o' their own." But we are not to take up the cudgels on behalf of the lawyer in politics. We would merely throw out the suggestion that he supplies a much-needed counterpoise to the academic politician. Mr Dundas was admittedly no great War Minister; but he was conversant with business and with the world, and consequently served as a valuable corrective to the academic strain which was the one flaw in Mr Pitt's composition, and which ruined Mr Windham's political usefulness.[2] We are free, however, to admit that when the two apparently incongruous elements meet in the same person, a peculiarly noxious and unsavoury compound is certain to result, though the *ne plus ultra* of cynical effrontery can only be attained in the rare cases in which that oleaginous hybrid, the lawyer-pedant, happens to have his spiritual home among the Bosches.

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[1] The Rights and Duties of an Advocate. By the Rt. Hon. Lord Herschell. Glasgow: 1890.

[2] Lord Malmesbury has some extremely interesting observations on this head in his 'Diaries and Correspondence,' iii. 590.

REVOLUTIONARY RÔLE OF AIRCRAFT IN WAR.

BY T. F. FARMAN.

It would be very rash for any one to attempt to predict what war will be in the future, but it does not require much discernment to foresee that the mastery of the air, now indisputably acquired by man, must entail profound modifications in military and naval armaments, and consequently in the strategy and tactics of commanders, as well as in the composition of their armies. The inestimable services rendered in the present war by the aerial forces of the belligerents have already surpassed all the hopes and expectations of those who, believing in the future of the dirigible and the aeroplane, were instrumental in obtaining the creation of the Fifth Arm. Since they are known to all, it is unnecessary to relate the performances of either the lighter or heavier than air vessels, or to insist on the deceptions experienced by the partisans of the former, and the realisation of the wildest dreams of those who believed in the vast superiority of the latter. The fact that both of them have made their presence felt in the remarkable manner known to the whole world, suffices to demonstrate that in future warfare they will assert their existence to an extent not yet fully recognised even by the Chiefs of the War Office and Admiralty of any nation.

It is permissible to make that assertion, because in Great Britain, as in France and even in Germany, the great majority of the heads of those departments and of the commanders of the land and naval forces were, at the beginning of the war in August 1914, very sceptical of the aeroplane being capable of effecting anything more than short scouting and exploring expeditions in calm weather. The aeroplane was therefore regarded by most generals as an encumbrance rather than a useful auxiliary. It is true the German people had founded exaggerated hopes on the power of their Zeppelins to intervene efficaciously in battle, and to spread terror and demoralisation in their enemy's ranks; but if the leaders of their armies were not already conscious that the vulnerability and other defects of their dirigibles, such as they existed at that time, deprived them of all military value, they were quickly taught the lesson. In any case, it is certain it was not on them they relied to secure, as they believed they would, a prompt and crushing victory. It was with their artillery, and the impetuous rush of their infantry and cavalry, they expected to over-

whelm those they had traitorously attacked.

At the commencement of hostilities the Germans were probably, almost as far as the English and French, from realising the immense importance of aeroplanes as instruments of war, but they had nevertheless furnished their armies with a greater number of those auxiliaries than were in the hands of the French and British forces. They had even armed many of them with bombs and mitrailleuses. No doubt a glimmer of the truth concerning the paramount importance of aerial instruments of war had penetrated their minds, and the appearance of so many aerial foes over the French and British armies in the first months of the war opened the eyes of the Allies to the necessity of surpassing the enemy, both in the number of avions and in their fighting capacities. Fortunately that was effected with greater promptitude than might have been expected.

All the inventors of aeroplanes seem to have understood the utility of the flying-machine as an instrument of war. Ader, who in 1897 was the first man to leave the earth on a machine heavier than air, has described in a remarkable book on the subject all the services he believed avions could render in war. The brothers Wilbur and Orville Wright were so thoroughly convinced that the army possessing a powerful aerial force could score an easy victory over an adversary unprovided with such an auxiliary, that they had no sooner constructed their first aeroplane in secret, than, after offering their invention to their own Government in America, they hastened to Europe in the hope of being able to sell the monopoly of flight to Germany. For what reason the negotiations for the sale of their patents failed has not been made public, but it is important to note they took place while Santos Dumont, Henry Farman, Delagrange, and Bleriot were vying with one another in France, in the summer of 1907, to capture the £2000 prize offered by MM. Henry Deutsch de la Meurthe and Archdeacon, to the man who should first prove the practical value of the aeroplane by flying out, veering completely round, and returning to his starting-point. When in the following summer Wilbur Wright came to France to make his first public experiments of flight, he insisted strongly on the value of his flying-machine as an instrument of war, and he was careful, by the intermediary of his financial supporter, M. Lazare Weiller, to invite the French military authorities to witness his performances. Yet it was not till after the first great aviation meeting held at Bétheny (Rheims) in August 1909 that the French Government ordered a few monoplanes and biplanes as experimental machines. Their success surpassed all expectations as scouting avions. From that moment the development of military aviation in France advanced with giant strides. Neverthe-

less two more years elapsed before it was discovered that the aeroplane could render invaluable service by rectifying the aim of gunners firing at objects hidden from their sight. The Fifth Arm was created, but on the outbreak of war the chiefs of the Aeronautic Department at the War Ministry had not foreseen the employment of the aeroplane for any other purpose than scouting and rectifying the fire of artillery. Of the 600 or 700 avions possessed by the French army, perhaps a dozen were armed with mitrailleuses for self-defence, but there was no question of using the machines for bombarding.

The profound modifications which the existence of the Fifth Arm must entail in war can be understood when it is remembered that the comparatively insignificant aerial forces possessed by the belligerents to-day have demonstrated the aeroplane is not only the indispensable auxiliary of all the other four arms, but that it is capable of performing most of the services rendered by them. It may be said, avions have already superseded cavalry for scouting, which they can effect infinitely quicker than horsemen, and with comparatively little risk. They can, moreover, carry their exploration far to the rear of the enemy's fighting lines. Though they cannot construct bridges, dig trenches, raise fortifications, &c., they can wreck bridges, railway lines, roads, &c., even in places far in the rear of the enemy, which the Engineering Corps could not possibly reach. Avions have not yet been constructed to carry very heavy loads of projectiles equal to those fired from the formidable guns now being used by the belligerents, but they can bombard all places situated within a radius of 200 or 250 miles, which is an infinitely longer range than that of any cannon it is possible to imagine. The crews of aeroplanes cannot engage in hand-to-hand fighting, but they can participate in the battle of infantry by preceding the charge with a storm of darts and bombs dropped on the enemy, and by pursuing him in retreat with the same weapons, thus once more substituting themselves for cavalry.

These now undeniable results, which when foreshadowed long ago in 'Blackwood's Magazine' were met with incredulity, open up a vast vista of possibilities, especially as the existing aeroplanes will most surely be superseded by vastly improved aerial craft of various descriptions, each well adapted for the particular work it will be called on to perform. The avions in the hands of the Allies at the beginning of the war were designed solely for scouting and exploration. A certain number of them have been transformed into bombarding machines, and quite recently a few double-engined aeroplanes, capable of carrying a fairly heavy load of explosives, have been sent to the front. But their number is insignificant.

Unless the present hostilities are prolonged much beyond the general prevision, it will evidently be impossible to construct the immense aerial fleets, and especially to train the necessary number of pilots and assistants, to enable the Fifth Arm to assume the *rôle* of paramount importance it is destined to play in the future.

It may be that, though the aeroplane can perform most of the services rendered by all the four traditional Arms, its existence will not entail the suppression of a single one of them. Nevertheless there seems good reason for believing that the great battles of the future, on which the destinies of nations will depend, will be fought by mighty aerial fleets, and that the land forces of the victors will complete the conquest by the prompt occupation of the enemy's country, of which the army will be at their mercy, especially because the victorious aerial fleet will surely be able to aid most materially in constraining it to surrender.

The military avions of to-day, each carrying many hundred pounds of powerful explosives, can penetrate 200 or 250 miles over a hostile country and return to their base of operations. It may be taken for granted the scope of their action will be vastly increased in a near future, and that the bombarding aeroplanes will transport a much more formidable load of bombs. Those heavily laden machines will be escorted and protected by fighting avions against the attack of the enemy that will inevitably seek to oppose their progress. To imagine, or rather to foresee, the paramount importance aerial vessels of all sorts will assume in the future, it is only necessary to realise the fact that every first-class Power will be able to build and man, not hundreds, but, if necessary, hundreds of thousands of aeroplanes. And the State which may thus obtain the mastery of the air will be able to impose its authority, for good or ill, on the other nations of the world. An insular position, like that of Great Britain, could not save the land from invasion by the aerial forces of a Continental Power. To insure their safety, the islanders must not depend on the sea to protect them, or on their navy. The only means of opposing such an invasion would be a superior aerial fleet.

It is, of course, impossible to foresee with certainty the composition of the future aerial fleets, but the commanders will be on board, and direct the manœuvres, as Admirals do at sea. The aerial vessels will naturally be of various descriptions, and it is not improbable that lighter than air-ships, each carrying either tons of explosives, or perhaps a hundred or more men, to be landed if and when required, will be amongst the number. In any case, there will certainly be giant aeroplanes capable of rendering similar services. The collision between two formidable aerial fleets will be terrible, but perhaps less sanguinary than a

great battle on land. Hundreds, and probably thousands, of aerial craft will be wrecked. Many will inevitably crash to the earth, entailing the annihilation of their occupants; but, most surely, a far greater number, being only crippled, will be brought to the ground without complete disaster, the soldiers manning them being, however, naturally made prisoners of war in the case of their falling within the enemy's lines.

The Allies have in the present war sought, with apparently signal success, to respect the rights of non-combatants even in their aerial raids. On the other hand, the Germans do not pretend to disguise the fact that the majority of their aerial expeditions have been undertaken with the premeditated intention of violating the code of warfare they signed at The Hague. They have sent their Zeppelins across the North Sea and English Channel on purpose to terrorise the non-combatant population by dropping explosive and incendiary bombs on them and their dwellings. Those acts were uselessly and barbarously cruel, perhaps especially because the means the unscrupulous foe had at his disposal to accomplish them were too small to have any chance of effecting the desired result of inspiring such terror as to induce the civil population to clamour for peace at any price. But the moment will come, and it is probably less distant than the general public imagine, when all the Powers of Europe will possess in their aerial fleets the means of putting the courage of the non-combatant populations of the enemy's country to a serious test. It is not only possible to imagine, but reasonable to foresee, that a foe may be inspired with the same contemptible sentiments as those of which the Germans now boast, and will be able to despatch a fleet of thousands of aerial vessels on a mission of devastation, which it may, by surprise, succeed in accomplishing, at least in part, before it can be opposed by the aerial defenders of the country, since it will be possible to make the start from almost anywhere, and to select the most unexpected destination.

Even if the aerial belligerents were always sincerely desirous to avoid endangering the lives of non-combatants, it would often be materially impossible to do so. The approach of land forces can be foreseen in sufficient time to enable the population to withdraw, and the bombardment of towns should be preceded by notice to the remaining inhabitants to seek shelter in their cellars or elsewhere. But attacks from the air will come suddenly and unexpectedly, in all parts of the country. Places at a distance of hundreds of miles from what is now called "the Front" will be just as exposed as those in the immediate vicinity of the enemy's land forces.

One of the main objects an

aerial fleet will have in view will naturally be the destruction of establishments in which the enemy manufactures his war materials: ammunition, cannons, bombs, aeroplanes, motors, &c. They will of course be protected, as far as possible, by defensive works on land and by strong aerial forces. Battles in the air in their neighbourhood will be inevitable, even if they are situated in the heart of the country. The victory of the invading fleet over the defending aerial forces, and the consequent success of its attempt to wreck many or several of the war material manufactories, would seriously cripple the enemy's fighting power. Of course all the persons employed in such military establishments will be aware they run the risks of war just as much as if they were serving in the ranks of the army. It is not unlikely that in certain cases it will, if necessary, be possible to effect a landing from the aerial fleet to complete the work of destruction.

Moreover, the invasion of a country by the air will be a possibility of which serious account will have to be taken in future wars. Given a sufficient number of aerial vessels and pilots, there is no reason why a descent should not be made on a most unexpected and undefended spot. Already the landing chassis of heavier than aircraft have been so much improved that those flying-machines can descend on and rise off very rough and unprepared ground, and the aeroplane constructors will certainly succeed ere long in reducing the space still required for the starting and alighting of their flying apparatuses. It may be argued that a little army landed from an aerial fleet will soon exhaust its ammunition and supplies, which is an undeniable probability. But the powerful bombs carried on the great bombarding machines, lighter or heavier than air, will be used to protect the forces landed till supplies of ammunition can be brought to them, or at least till they can re-embark on their aerial vessels. The damage it will be possible to do in this manner, and the moral effect such aerial raids are calculated to produce, will be considerable, even if the landing has to be followed by re-embarkation. It is, however, quite possible to foresee that the extermination of the little invading army, or its retreat, will not be inevitable. The landing-place may be so chosen as to render it impossible to send promptly a considerable army against it, and the aerial forces, which it may be supposed will always be quickly despatched to the spot, may be overpowered by the invading aerial fleet. In that case reinforcements and supplies of ammunition, &c., may be received, and a permanent footing in the country obtained. No one will pretend that the execution of such a feat of war will be easy. On the contrary, it must be most difficult, especially when the place of landing is far distant from the frontier or coast, and to dream of under-

taking it the invader must possess, or imagine he possesses, undeniable superiority in the air.

The possibility of aerial craft facilitating invasion by sea appears undeniable. It may be that at the present moment the bombs carried on aeroplanes are not sufficient to sink or seriously disable big vessels of war, but they are already powerful enough to wreck smaller war-craft, such as torpedo-boats, &c., and it will certainly not be long before aeroplanes will be built to transport projectiles equal to those fired from naval guns. The destruction of vessels of war by the aerial artillery will therefore depend on the aim of the bomb-droppers. Already, before the present war, the Germans made experiments of bomb-dropping from dirigibles in the mouth of the Elbe. They alleged they proved that from the height of about 100 metres (328 feet), a projectile could be dropped with almost complete certainty on a target measuring 1 square metre ($10\frac{3}{4}$ square feet), and that consequently it could be dropped into the funnel of a war-vessel, entailing its destruction. There is no reason to doubt the correctness of that assertion, but the dirigible which might attempt to achieve the exploit would have but a very poor chance of surviving the fire which would be directed against it while seeking to place itself at such a low altitude over its prey. Nevertheless the means of dropping projectiles from great altitudes with precision from vessels lighter and heavier than air are being sought in all countries, and it may be taken for granted they will be invented. Even supposing the aim be not so accurate as that attained with land and naval artillery, the fact that it will be possible to assail vessels on the sea with a veritable storm of powerful bombs, dropped from altitudes placing the aggressors beyond the range of gun-fire from the ships, is of paramount importance. It shows that the Power possessing supremacy in the air will, in no distant future, be able to clear the sea, and thus facilitate the landing of an invading army. Since the only efficacious weapon which can be used against an aerial vessel is another aerial vessel, every nation, careful of its safety and independence, will in the future develop its aerial forces of all descriptions with as much, if not greater, energy as in the past it augmented its land forces or navy.

People may be inclined to inquire why some, if not all, the achievements indicated above as certain to be accomplished in the future are not undertaken without further delay in the present war. There are many good reasons for not attempting them at the present moment. Among them is that none of the belligerent Powers possesses a sufficient number of avions to constitute a really formidable aerial fleet. And, admitting that the machines and their motors could be constructed within a few months, which

is not the case, it would be a much more difficult task to train the necessary number of pilots, bomb-droppers, aerial gunners, &c., to say nothing of all the mechanicians required on land. Then, there is the great question of the organisation of the aerial forces. An aerial fleet must have a commander, or what may be called a "Flight Admiral," on board one of the aerial vessels. He must be able to transmit his orders to the pilots of the various craft under his command. Already during the present hostilities, aerial raids have been made with considerable success by little squadrons of avions. Those expeditions have certainly had a leader, but each of the pilots received his instructions before starting, and carried them out to the best of his ability. Such general orders will be quite insufficient when real battles in the air have to be fought. Victory will be secured, not by numerical strength alone, but by the tactics of the commander and his skill in utilising, at the proper moment, the various fractions of his aerial forces, which must be composed of avions of essentially different types. At the present moment, all the aeroplanes which can be built and properly manned are required by the belligerents as auxiliaries to their armies numbering millions of men. They are needed everywhere, for scouting, to rectify the fire of artillery, to hamper the concentration of hostile troops by blowing up bridges, destroying railway junctions, damaging roads, &c.; to wreck ammunition and provision stores, to protect the land forces and cities and towns against the attack of hostile avions; and also to lend their aid in battle by dropping bombs and darts on the enemy, thus checking charges and converting checks into helter-skelter retreats. It is seldom twenty, thirty, or forty avions can be spared to make a raid over the enemy's country, and the damage that such a small aerial force can do, even if it be directed against a place of vital importance to the enemy, is not often sufficient to materially hamper the operations of his land forces or to create serious panic. It may be that if the war is prolonged another year or more, a really formidable aerial fleet, independent of the auxiliary aerial forces indispensable to the army, will be organised by one or more of the belligerent States, and it is certain the Power which may first accomplish that feat will thus acquire a very serious advantage over its adversaries.

FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

MUHAMMAD YUSUF, NASR, INVADES AFGHANISTAN.

I.

SHAH GUL, *dafadar*, had just been promoted and Babar Nika was his first command, so it was not surprising that his keenness was obtrusive, and the person who found it most troublesome was Abdulla Jan, *manjawar*,[1] who looked after the shrine which held the bones of Babar Nika and gave his name to the post. Particularly was he troubled one morning when Shah Gul insisted upon knowing the identity of a Sulieman Khel whom he had met leaving the hut of the *manjawar:* Abdulla Jan was a paid spy of the militia, but that did not save the half-hour, occupied more by threats than persuasion, which it took to extract the information that his late visitor was Lawang, a noted outlaw on whose head was a price set. The men of the post were out cutting grass, but thanks to three being down with scurvy and one with fever, Shah was enabled to relieve the guard. The farrier was busy at his work, so he too was impressed, and counting Shah Gul as one —he was worth ten—the band numbered six in all. Lawang had an hour's start, but he had no warning of the pursuit, and he was on foot while his pursuers were mounted: they were soon up with him, and the fire that greeted their arrival showed that he was not alone. Shah Gul's band were quickly off their horses, and they roughly tied them together head to tail, for they could not afford horseholders. They fired a few rounds in reply, almost in the manner of returning a salute, and then Shah Gul had made up his mind. He sent half his band up a *nala* to his right, to a place from where he hoped they would be able to enfilade his opponents, and, to cover the move, he and his two companions fired as rapidly as they could. But the noise they made was too much for the horses: they stampeded, down one *nala* and up the next, and eventually they came to a halt behind Lawang and Co.: and long before Shah Gul realised what had happened Lawang and his three companions were mounted and galloping away, while two spare horses followed peacefully behind. They may have smiled at their luck, but they were not yet done with Shah Gul. He was soon back at Babar Nika, where he found that no one had yet returned from grass cutting, so it was with the same five men that he started off once more. This time they

[1] *Manjawar* = caretaker.

were against mounted men and men who would expect pursuit, but the tracks were easy to follow and it was unlikely that Lawang's party were proficient riders. Still it was bound to be a long business, and Shah Gul saw no good in wearing out his force at the commencement, so, after pursuing the tracks for some fifteen miles all in Afghan territory, he halted for the day. Next morning saw him on the move once more, and the day was not far advanced when a cold camp fire and marks on the ground showed him where Lawang had spent the night. He had now to move with the greatest caution, but the tracks followed a well-defined road which he could search from the higher ground and hurry along when certain that all was clear. In this manner he continued until midday, when on the far side of a little valley he saw two horses tied up under a tree: the near side of the valley was out of sight. They were now thirty miles from the border, and well within Sulieman Khel country, so they dared not risk losing their horses: one man, therefore, was left behind while they crawled to the top of the crest which separated them from the valley. Below lay Lawang, asleep in the shade of an olive-tree, and not far off was a companion. A few shots settled their business, but the fight was not yet over. A *kirri*[1] of Sulieman Khels was at hand, and had turned out at the first shot: and, worst of all, they commanded the retreat to the horses. The horseholder attempted to manœuvre his charge to a position more favourable to Shah Gul and his men, but it could not be done, and meanwhile they were being surrounded. Shah Gul got a bullet through both thighs, but he had wit enough to see where his only hope lay.

"Mount and gallop for the fort," he shouted to the horseholder. The man showed signs of disobeying, but another yell convinced him that it was really meant, and gallop he did. Then a curious thing happened: the fire of the Sulieman Khels ceased: it was rather instructive. While they thought they could bag the whole party they were willing to have a try: they could afterwards deny all knowledge of the fight, or attribute it to the Mahsuds, whose tale of crimes was already so great that a small thing like the killing of six men would be hardly worth denying: but directly an eye-witness had escaped they stopped firing as one man. Their wandering life, sometimes in Afghanistan, sometimes in British territory, rendered them too open to reprisals to admit of their offending either Government, and they now tried to remedy what they had already done, but two men were past recall, and all the others were wounded.

[1] *Kirri* = village. Only applied to nomads.

II.

One of the remarkable features of the Anambar district is the variety of climate it can enjoy at one and the same moment. While Shah Gul and his little band were feeling the heat of the sun no less than that of the Sulieman Khel fire, Muhammad Yusuf was making slow progress across the snowy waste that surrounded Palezgir. It is hard for those who have seen the high plateau known as the Lowara only in the warmer months to realise that the pitch of dreariness it then achieves can be exceeded, but so it is. Winter finds it infinitely more unattractive; for even the larks, its only permanent residents, have hidden away somewhere, and there is no hope of meeting the occasional *kirri* of *powindahs*[1] that might fairly be expected to greet the traveller every now and then in his summer wanderings. Sand and sage-studded *putt*, with an occasional patch of blinding white alkaline deposit, have given place to one prolonged waste of snow, broken only in a feeble way by a few unimpressive hills that have just sufficient character to throw off some of their chilly mantle. Of such a landscape Palezgir is quite a feature, and its small fort, sited on a gentle rise, is conspicuous for miles around. The *tehsil*, the only other building, is a straggling affair housing a mixed collection of militia—an overflow from the fort—and civil officials and hangers-on: its distant view is less impressive than that of the fort, but it is considerably larger and more comfortable, and it was in the civil guest-house that Yusuf hoped to spend the night rather than in the crowded quarters of his fellow-militiamen. Although the sun was bright above him, and the fort well within sight, he kept glancing in the direction of the wind: he knew the dangers of the waste he was crossing, and he mistrusted the uncertain soughing of the breeze: he knew, too, that despite its apparent proximity, the fort was a good eight miles away, and he recalled tales, which he had no reason to disbelieve, of whole bands of travellers blotted out by unexpected blizzards. His progress was miserably slow, for his pony sank deep in the snow at every step, and before long he was dismounted and leading him. The wind was rising, and its wild moaning but emphasised the solitude. He had now been in sight of the fort for over an hour, yet it seemed no nearer, and, turning round to judge his distance from the hills through which it had first caught his eye, he was horrified to find them apparently well within hail. There are few things more galling than one's inability to judge distance in those high clear atmospheres, and experience supplies no antidote

[1] *Powindah* = nomad.

to the resulting depression. Moreover, trudging through foot-deep snow that has been sun-softened is no inspiriting exercise at the best of times, and when no amount of trudging begets any appreciable progress it takes a stout heart to be undaunted in the face of an approaching blizzard. For now there was no room for doubt: the keening of the wind itself was an almost certain sign, herring-backed clouds streaked the sky, while the light was oppressed by that strange gloom that never occurs excepting before a storm. Yusuf cursed himself for his folly in coming to those barren wastes for his furlough: if he had refused to take it at all his name would have been put at the bottom of the furlough roster, but he might have gone to some warmer clime despite the fact that his uncle had seen fit to immure himself in the snow. The year before, one of the usual disputes had taken place between Muhammad Akbar's *kirri* and some Sulieman Khels. The latter accused Muhammad Akbar of having personally instigated a raid on their camels, and, with a stronger case than was usually their lot, they had petitioned to the Political Agent of Anambar for the arrest of Muhammad Akbar as a security for the settlement. There was little likelihood of the Political Agent complying with the demand, but Muhammad Akbar decided to avoid all possibility of his liberty being interfered with and himself subjected to insult and petty tyranny from the host of minor officials that are the curse of every Eastern government and, to a large extent, of the British *raj*. For the conduct of his case he appointed a *mukhtiar*,[1] and he entrusted to Yusuf's brother the care of his camels on their annual pilgrimage to the Derajat, whilst he himself with his family and a small following spent the winter at Do China, a small village on the Afghan side of the border, but within easy reach of the telegraph at Palezgir which enabled him to keep in touch with his representative. The feeling which thus determined his home for the winter was one which had been strengthened, if not actually originated, by his dealings with white men in their own country, but it was quite beyond the comprehension of Yusuf, who dubbed it mere stupidity, and resented it all the more on account of the trouble it caused himself.

The sky grew more threatening every moment: Yusuf mounted and strove to push his pony into a trot: it was a poor shambling affair, but it realised some five miles an hour, which was double the pace he had been going dismounted, and although it was dreadfully tiring for the pony, that was a matter of small account at the moment. Snow was now falling, if it could be so described when it seemed rather to be picked up in play from the ground by the wind: the flakes

[1] *Mukhtiar* = attorney, legal representative.

grew more frequent and yet more frequent, and at last the blizzard broke. Yusuf bent forward in his saddle at the blast and gave thanks that it was not full in front of him, for indeed it would have been hard to face. The wind had been from the west all morning, and it got him full on the left side as he made for Palezgir: if it would only keep its direction he was saved, for he was now a bare two miles from the post, and with the direction of the gale to guide him he would have every chance of finding it. But if it changed! His compass was his left ear, and he nervously watched every deviation it indicated from a right-angle course to the wind; but it soon became numb, and he had hardly restored it to feeling when he had to do the same to his nose. He doubled the share of *puggri* he had allotted to the left side of his head, and, with his feeler thus dulled, he had to rely on the sight of his right eye to guide by the direction of the falling snow. He searched eagerly for landmarks: the smallest point would have given him an indication, for he knew the country well, but there were none. Was he being blown out of his course, and ought he to make ground to his left to allow for leeway? It was hard to say, and did it matter? He felt dull from the continued beating of the wind and snow on his face, and his pony seemed done. Every moment the pace grew slower and slower, and now he hardly progressed at all. The pony was sitting down behind! Or was he rising in front? The puzzling motion continued, and then the blast suddenly ceased. Yusuf realised that he was under the lee of the fort. His pony's instinct had saved him.

III.

Three days later Yusuf was seated within one of the little stone huts that formed Muhammad Akbar's encampment at Do China. The majority had been run up for the occasion, while some were converted cattle-pens. The chinks between the stones had been filled in the first instance with mud, and now their heavy covering of snow did away with all fear of draught excepting through the doorways, which consisted in most cases of a blanket, but in that of the hut which sheltered Yusuf of a real wooden door, probably looted from one of the posts which the militia had abandoned a couple of years before. The comparative luxury of the hut was evinced by its two rooms and the coloured goat-hair blankets that covered the walls and the floor: the roof of river grass laid over beams sagged badly in the middle, but there was no fear of leakage until the snow began to melt, and that was many days too far ahead for a Pathan to consider. Sharing the room in which Yusuf sat were two women, Vera and Karima, both straining their eyes in the dim lamplight over

the embroidery of shirts. Vera was doing more work, but Karima made more fuss about it, and showed more resentment at anything which disturbed her concentration and caused her somewhat 'prentice fingers to go astray.

"My father had a guest," began Karima, breaking a silence of which she herself had been the cause, "before the snow began who told us all about the war. The German *badshah*, he said, had repeated the *kalima*[1] and given his daughter in marriage to the Sultan-i-Roum."

"He is an old man to change his religion," replied Yusuf. "And the English say that he has no daughters who are not already given in marriage."

"The English hate him because he has killed so many of them."

"A number of English have been killed, but lakhs of Germans have died with them, and the English have the whole of Hindustan to draw from, though some is precious poor stuff."

"It is dreadful *zulm*[2] to make the people of Hindustan fight for the English."

"We talk a lot about *zulm* now when we have nothing else to do, but before the English came there was so much *zulm* that we dared not mention it. If I told a sahib that I thought him a *zalim*,[2] he'd laugh and say that perhaps he was. That is not the way of a tyrant."

"But surely the Mussulmans of Hindustan would like to be under a Mussulman ruler? And the German *badshah* has promised to put the Amir Sahib on the throne of Hindustan and to give back Egypt to the Sultan-i-Roum."

"Why should we trust the German *badshah* any more now that he has become a Mussulman? When he was still of the faith of his fathers he broke his word, at least so our sahibs say, and they never lie. The rumour is that his first *mehrbani*[3] to Mussulmans has been to imprison the Khalifa and to promise the sultanate to Enver Bey Sahib. And Enver Bey has proved his friendliness to the Amir Sahib by sending him a bangle and earrings."[4]

"You only hear what the sahibs let you, but the Roumi —my father's guest was a Roumi — comes from Europe, where they can hear both sides, and the Sultan-i-Roum would not fight for the Germans unless he had something to gain."

"I only know what the sahibs tell me, but I can believe them. I have met sepoys who knew the Germans in China, and your father has dealt with them in Calcutta: they all tell the same story: the difference between the Germans and the English is

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[1] *Kalima* = the Muhammadan creed.

[2] *Zulm* = oppression, tyranny. *Zalim* = tyrant.

[3] *Mehrbani* has no English equivalent. "Kindness," "favour," are as near as we can get.

[4] Women's ornaments, signifying the Turk's appreciation of the Amir's failure to assist him and his allies in 1914. This actually occurred.

the difference between night and day."

"Then why are you here if you so love the English? Why are you not fighting for them?"

"Hundreds of us volunteered, but we were told that no irregular cavalry were wanted."

"But cannot you enlist in some regular regiment, something with lances and swords like the regiment at Dera Ismail Khan?"

"The British *sarkar* does not take Ghilzais in its regular army. Besides, I could not get away from the Yaghistan Militia, as all discharges are refused during the war."

"There is no glory to be gained in the Yaghistan Militia. It is all underhand work, spying and being spied on, ambushing and being ambushed. My father tells me that in this war lakhs of men march up to other lakhs who are waiting for them, all in the open day, and they fight together with lances and bayonets: and those who die see death before they meet it: it is all done in the sight of thousands, and a brave man is known, and so is a coward."

"Yes, little one, every word is true. But need you add bitterness to what I already feel?"

"Why should you not fight in that way here instead of always lying behind a rock and looking for your enemy behind a rock?"

Poor Yusuf's amazed expression gave his only reply. He knew the answer well enough, but he also knew how futile it would be to attempt to explain to Karima the folly of presenting a target to an enemy who declined to be equally sporting.

"You have no cannons and no *tamasha*,"[1] she continued. "If only you had cannons you might knock down some of the Amir Sahib's forts, and that would be worth doing."

"The Amir's forts!" replied Yusuf scornfully. "I should not mind attacking any one of those on the border by myself and without any arms; but I should gain no honour by doing so. Kafircha has a nominal garrison of fourteen *khassadars*,[2] but the most I have ever seen there was two deaf old greybeards with muzzle-loading rifles, and Spinkai is no better. Three months ago I met a patrol from Mizrai Kats who all had breech-loaders, but they had only one round of ammunition apiece. If you want me to attack Kafircha, I shall do it with no more weapon than my *chuplies*,[3] and bring back the garrison captive, but I shall expect no *izzat*,[4] only trouble on both sides of the border."

"Would you attack Haodak?"

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[1] *Tamasha* = display.

[2] *Khassadars* = irregular Afghan infantry.

[3] *Chuplies* = sandals. When well studded with nails they form quite useful weapons.

[4] *Izzat* = honour, glory.

"That is not a border post, and it is held by a lot of men, but with the help of two or three others I should be quite ready to attack it if there was any good reason for doing so. I have no doubt we should find all the garrison asleep, but even if we killed no one it would lead to endless trouble, and I should be dismissed from the militia by the English and banished from Afghanistan by the Amir Sahib."

"You would find more than the garrison there," said Muhammad Akbar who had just entered. "Three of your militia were captured by the Khoidad Khels[1] some days ago, and they have been imprisoned at Haodak pending the orders of the Amir."

He then narrated the story of Shah Gul's fight. When it was over a *khassadar sudbashi*[2] had appeared with a patrol, and, bursting with his small authority, had insisted on taking away the prisoners to his little fort on the edge of the Lowara plateau.

IV.

1914 was a year of unrest for the whole world, and in Afghanistan this chiefly manifested itself in a strong desire for news. The wildest rumours flew about and fed the appetite of the herd, but the Lord of Kabul was not content with such coarse food, and, as a supplement to his regular agents who informed him of all that passed in the main centres of the outer world, he established new men to keep him in touch with the feeling of the Mussulman peoples just beyond his borders. One of these, an officer of the Afghan regular army, was placed in command of the fort at Haodak. It was quite beyond his power to raise his band of *khassadars* to a state of efficiency, but at least he succeeded in making them considerably more enterprising about their work, and it was on one of his long patrols that he came up just too late to witness the fight between Shah Gul's band and the Sulieman Khels. It is only fair to assume that he was ignorant of the free-and-easy customs of that border, where parties of militia from the British side frequently cross in pursuit of raiders, and are often helped by Afghan peasants to hunt down those pests, who, however much they may be protected by Afghan officials, are a curse to all honest men on both sides alike. Had he been better informed he would have realised that no isolated act could have any effect in maintaining the dignity of an administration represented along a frontier of many hundred miles by a few underpaid old greybeards, and he would have overlooked the trespass while

[1] Khoidad Khel is a section of the Sulieman Khel tribe.

[2] *Sudbashi* = an officer over 100 men, a captain.

he did what he could to preserve the peace of the borderland. For he had sufficient breadth of outlook to realise that, whether the mind of the Amir was turned towards peace or towards war, no useful purpose could be served by infinitesimal bickerings of outposts; and at the moment he had no axe of his own to grind. The predicament in which he placed the Sulieman Khels was an exceedingly awkward one. If they refused to obey his order —as they easily could, for he had only ten men to back him —they would incur the enmity of the Amir, and they had already offended the British Government; while if they obeyed, they abandoned their sole means of patching up a peace with the latter. They did not refuse, and the *sudbashi*, after a certain amount of fairly excusable bluster, in which he told them all about his past and also let them into some of the secrets of his future, led off his prisoners in triumph to the exceedingly cold spot which had been allotted to him as a home for the winter.

Haodak is generally vacated after the *powindahs* have passed on their way to the plains, and only taken into use again to regulate their return in the spring; but everything was unusual that year, and, as an Afghan Government could not be expected to make provision for the unusual, the garrison must have had a most uncomfortable time. Supplies of all sorts must have been hard to come by once the villagers had gone down for the winter to the lower levels, and the fort must have been extremely overcrowded with its garrison of twenty men instead of the usual seven or ten. True, its nominal garrison was forty, but the Afghan custom of doling out an exiguous pay, six monthly in arrears, drives the *khassadar* to seek supplementary means to fill his belly, and these generally take him away from the post which is his titular home. In the case of Haodak this normally reduced the garrison to ten men or so, and living accommodation suitable for that number was all that was kept up. As can be imagined, the honourable establishment of Khassadars is not a highly efficient one, which makes it all the more maddening for British militia officers, inspecting and training their men, and generally putting in a lot of hard, honest work on that borderland, to compare the state of prosperity that flourishes beneath the ægis of the *khassadar* with what they see in the land which they themselves protect. Smiling villages, orchards, cultivation right up to the boundary pillars, are a common feature of the Afghan side; while black tents of primitive design, surrounded by flocks of camels or goats, form the most prosperous picture that our side can produce. In one place at least the very *karez*[1] that waters the Afghan

[1] *Karez* = a water channel combined with a series of wells.

fields rises in, and flows at ground-level for some miles through, British territory, but the first point at which it is used for cultivation is by the boundary pillar. The reason, however, has nothing to do either with the *khassadar* or with the militia. It lies chiefly in the characters of the peasants on either side —on ours the miserable Kakar, whose whole ambition is summed up in the words "to carry on," and that fine enterprising race, the Tokhi, across the border. A minor cause is found in the fact that the Afghan officials harbour Mahsuds and other bad characters, who raid on our side, while we keep no equally efficient robbers to harry them.

The *sudbashi's* wanderings had brought him more than once to the *kirri* of Muhammad Akbar: there he was received as beseemed his position and birth, and on one occasion he was fortunate enough for a moment to see Karima unveiled. Mayhap it was the hope of this that had determined the direction of his patrols: there would be nothing surprising in his having heard of her attractions before his arrival in the district, for the fame of her fair face was no local one, and the promptitude with which he made an offer for her hand seemed to argue that the intention had been in the making long before he met her. It was formed in no niggard spirit, and, backed as it was by the shadow of his influence at Kabul, Muhammad Akbar found it a hard one to resist. The dislike which Karima herself had taken to the man might have swayed her father had the weight on the other side been less great; but, ready as he was to humour his daughter, he had no intention of allowing her whims to settle her future and largely to influence his own by arousing the enmity of a man whose power might be anything from the faint influence which he derived from his score of *khassadars* to the dangerous and unrestrained might of a favourite of the Kabul Amir, as rumour held him to be. It would have gone hard with Karima had not Muhammad Akbar already formed other plans — plans which he was loathe to forgo; but even they could not prevail upon him to give the *sudbashi* a definite refusal.

Yusuf on his arrival was all ignorant of the situation, but he did not take long to sense how matters lay, and there is little reason to doubt that a desire to score off the *sudbashi* rather than any hope of personal glory was what induced him to consider so harebrained a scheme as an attack on Haodak. It was characteristic of him that he said nothing further until his return from a short visit to Palezgir, when he announced his intention of spending the next ten days in the Mando Khel village of Gustoi. His professed object was to shoot *markhor*, and he enlarged on his plans to Karima; but although her geography was pretty vague, she knew sufficient to be aware that Gustoi was the nearest

village on the British border to the Afghan post of Haodak, and she was not long in drawing the inference that Yusuf intended to use it as his base for an attack. The knowledge of what she had effected turned her in a moment from a kittenish young animal fond of using its claws into a conscious woman —conscious not only of what she was, but also of what she wanted, and she exerted herself to turn Yusuf from his project. She might have succeeded had she put her absolute veto upon it, but, while the many-sided danger repelled her, the sporting nature of the venture appealed to something in her blood, and she could not bring herself to give her orders to her willing slave in such a manner that he would realise that in very fact she meant them.

V.

A fortnight after the arrival of the prisoners at Haodak, Yusuf was on his way there from Gustoi. With two companions he had started at dawn, and midday saw them little more than half way. The distance as the crow flies is under ten miles, but road there is none, and the particular route they chose had approved itself not so much on account of its ease, as because of the extreme improbability of meeting any one upon it. At its best it led from rock to rock up a precipitous *nala* bed; at its worst it followed a *markhor* track along the face of a precipice, with some hundred feet of nothingness and a jagged mass of rocks below, and a seemingly unlimited expanse of cliff face above. One of Yusuf's companions was a Mando Khel from the village of Gustoi: he was an ex-sepoy of the militia, and a hankering for the abandoned delights of soldiering, stimulated by a few rupees from Yusuf, was the chief, but not the only, cause of his presence: his other inducement was more honourable—the most honourable according to the standards of his tribe, — a desire for revenge. The garrison of Haodak had stolen a sheep from his flock during the past summer, and he still awaited redress: he was a stout man, likely to be useful in any scrap, and he knew the way to Haodak: he knew, too, the inside of the fort and the customs of the garrison. The third man was a Brahui, one of the detachment at Palezgir: he was there for the pure love of the thing: when Yusuf suggested his coming his only difficulty was that of being allowed away, but a wire for ten days' leave to his home to see his dying father brought an unexpectedly kind reply: the country of the Brahuis is fifteen days' march from Palezgir — but even Homer sometimes nodded, they say. For weapons, each of Yusuf's army had one of those long triangular knives that no

Pathan [1] is ever willingly without, and one other implement. In Yusuf's case it was a tent-pegging spear, with a plain iron socket where the spear-head ought to have been: the Mando Khel carried a length of rope, and the Brahui a curious-looking contrivance, which was so efficient, yet so simple, that it can hardly have been an original idea on Yusuf's part, although I have never seen it described before. It was T-shaped, with a strong piece of wood a foot and a half long for the cross-bar, and a lighter piece bound to it with string for the shank: the latter was about three feet long, and slightly bent at the lower end.

There was no need for hurry, and they wanted to save their energies as far as possible for the work before them, so they pursued their way with care and deliberation, until the early afternoon brought them into a range of low hills overlooking the plateau on which Haodak is situated. For the remainder of the day they rested, and as soon as it was sufficiently dark to prevent their being seen they made their way towards the fort: snow was falling and the wind was bitterly cold. They approached with the utmost caution, for their sole weapon was surprise, and the faintest suspicion of their presence spelt failure. They were soon under the lee of the fort, and as they crept silently round the Mando Khel indicated the position of the guard-room and of the barracks: they pressed their ears to the wall of the latter and convinced themselves that the garrison were asleep. Their next task was to ascertain the position of the sentry: of the four corners two were bastioned, and it was most probable that he was in one of these, but he kept so still that although they listened intently at both they could hear nothing. The Mando Khel made a signal to Yusuf and stole away into the darkness: Yusuf remained where he was while the Brahui crawled round to the other corner: then the cry of a jackal broke the stillness of the night, and soon afterwards the Brahui came back with the information that the sentry had betrayed his presence in the far bastion: almost at the same moment the Mando Khel joined them. They quickly tied the rope to the cross-piece of the T, and mounted the shank in the socket of the tent-pegging spear: then they slowly raised the whole contrivance until the cross-piece was clear of the top of the fort wall, and they moved it along with the rope trailing against the parapet until they felt it slip into one of the long perpendicular loopholes that divided the parapet into sections: they now lowered the spear, which became free from the shank as soon as the T had engaged in the loophole. The cross-piece was inside the parapet and formed a sure attachment for the rope, which passed through the loophole.

[1] Brahuis are not Pathans, but they subscribe to many customs of the latter.

The three men quickly scrambled up the rope and over the parapet: they avoided the roof which covered the barracks and the guard-room, and they took up a position in a dark corner to pounce upon the sentry when he approached them on his rounds. For half an hour they waited, while every moment increased the danger of the sentry summoning his relief: he never once changed his position, but he gave sufficient evidence of life to prove that he was not asleep. They might crawl up and pounce upon him where he stood, but the risk of failure was great, and everything pledged Yusuf to success. The Mando Khel slipped down the rope, and soon in the far distance broke out the cries of a perfect pack of jackals: the sentry was too bored to resist such a distraction, and moved in the direction of the sound: there was a short scuffle, and he lay securely bound and gagged: by this time the Mando Khel had returned, and, while the Brahui watched the prisoner, he and Yusuf stole to the guard-room and impounded the remaining three rifles of the guard. The garrison was disarmed for the moment, but a rush would bring them to the arms-room where the balance of their rifles lay: they, too, must be removed. It took Yusuf's party over an hour to cut a hole in the roof of the arms-room sufficiently large for a man to pass through, and the arms had to be handled with exceeding care in the darkness to prevent them coming together and rattling, but by the end of another hour the Mando Khel had placed twenty rifles on the edge of a well some fifty yards north of the fort, and he only awaited Yusuf's signal to tip them all into it. Six arms still lay on the fort roof: five were those taken from the militia, and the sixth, which felt like a Mannlicher, Yusuf judged to be the private arm of the *sudbashi*. He blew a loud blast on his whistle: to the listeners it seemed that all the world must hear, but the only response was a dull splash from the direction of the well, and it was necessary for the Brahui to hammer on the roof of the guard-room to attract the attention of the guard.

"All right, don't be impatient," cried the guard commander. "You have not yet done half your watch, and I am the person to decide when you shall be relieved."

"I want the fort commander," broke in the Brahui, and the man below, now sufficiently awake to realise the strangeness of the voice, immediately aroused his men. There was a confused sound from within as the guard tumbled their bedding about in the search for their missing rifles.

"What have you done with our rifles?" demanded the guard commander, emerging at last.

"Never mind about them," was the reply. "Call the fort commander, as I told you."

By this time the Mando Khel

was back, and before the fort commander was out of his room Yusuf and his two companions were in position, each with a loaded rifle in his hand and another slung over his shoulder.

"Who are you?" demanded the *sudbashi.*

"A friend of the prisoners," replied Yusuf.

"What are you doing here?"

"I have come to remove them."

The remainder of the garrison had meanwhile filtered through various doors into the courtyard of the fort, and they kept making stealthy movements in the direction of two flights of steps which led on to the roof.

"Stop that," cried Yusuf. "Collect your men or we shall commence shooting."

The order given by the post commander was hardly necessary after the warning.

"If you want the prisoners you may come down and take them," he continued.

"I require them up here, and the sooner they arrive the less chance there will be of these rifles going off. Don't rush for the arms-room: you will lose men, and you will find it empty."

A flood of invective broke from the Afghan, and it continued so long, assisted by the whole garrison, that Yusuf was compelled to shout out "*Chup shah*,"[1] and to back up his words by letting off a rifle to show that he was really in earnest.

"*Salaam*, Bahadur," sneered the *sudbashi.* "I bow to the man who dares single-handed to make war on the Amir of Afghanistan."

"Not on the Amir Sahib," retorted Yusuf. "Only on a little Kizilbash[2] *sudbashi* who was turned out of the Afghan regular army and has now shown himself unfit to be a *khassadar.*"

"Every *khassadar* has the Amir Sahib behind him when he is doing his duty, and that is more than can be said of the servants of your petti-fogging *kafir*[3] government."

"I have no desire to discuss with you the merits of the Amir Sahib. Hand over the prisoners and I will leave you to thresh out the matter with your alert and valiant following."

"Certainly, O Greatest of Nasrs! Your orders shall be obeyed to-night, none the less that the day is near when you end your life at the bidding of the Amir Sahib. Bring out the prisoners, O Khassadars!"

Five or six *khassadars* disappeared into one of the barrack-rooms and returned bearing a bundle of humanity wound up in a blanket. They placed it on the ground, and its efforts to arrange itself in comfort proved that life was not yet extinct. Another man followed, feebly and with the help of two sticks: he too sought rest on the ground.

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[1] *Chup shah* = be silent; but its value is more like "shut up."

[2] A Persian race who live round Kabul.

[3] *Kafir* = infidel.

"Behold your friends," sneered the *sudbashi.* "What does your highness desire that we should do now? Shall we bury them where they lie, or would you rather that we took them to the cemetery where the third of the heroes already rests with his face towards Mecca?"

The man with the sticks now arose and made his shuffling way up one of the flights of steps: the Brahui met him at the top and examined him as a precaution against treachery. The man was Shah Gul. He quickly assured Yusuf of his own and his companion's inability to leave the fort that night, or for many a long day without assistance. This had been half expected, and was provided for by the keeping back of the *sudbashi's* rifle from those that went into the well.

"Truly the men cannot travel, O Sudbashi!" said Yusuf. "But you can carry them on *charpoys.*"

"Your humblest of humble servants will be delighted to do that, or any other thing that the great lord his master may be pleased to order."

"It is not an order. The question is a simple one of exchange. Here I have a rifle which I feel convinced is your own. It will be given to you on arrival of the prisoners at Babar Nika; but they must both be alive and have no complaints to make about your treatment of them from now onwards. Carry them on *charpoys,* or I shall not consider that you have treated them well."

"Truly, O Nasr! you take me for the greatest fool in all the world, yet you hide the thought no better than you do the dread you feel for the Amir Sahib and your contempt for the miserable Government that you serve. What guarantee have I that you will keep your promise when I have brought the prisoners to Babar Nika?"

"None, save the word of a fellow Mussulman. I shall swear on the Koran, if that will please you. But it is your only chance of getting back your rifle. The English Government are already demanding the restoration of the prisoners, and you may get the order to send them back at any moment. The Amir Sahib will take no interest in your rifle, which is not a Government one, and I shall be delighted to keep it, if you do not fulfil my conditions."

The parley might have continued throughout the night had not Yusuf cut it short after a few more exchanges in which he farther impressed his conditions on the *sudbashi.* The latter had realised immediately that he would have no alternative once Yusuf escaped with the rifle, but this in no way diminished his flow of talk, and he was still haranguing when the Brahui and the Mando Khel had disappeared over the parapet. Perhaps his intention had been to delay their departure until the moon arose to facilitate his search for the arms which he

knew must be hidden somewhere in the vicinity: if so he was unsuccessful, and Yusuf wasted no time in following his comrades. Directly his head was out of sight the *sudbashi* rushed up the steps and threw off the rope from the parapet: he then drew an automatic pistol from the holster at his side and had discharged a magazine-load at the dark figures outlined against the snow before a couple of rifle shots drove him to cover. The three men ran from the vicinity of the fort and did not reduce their pace until they felt safe from further pistol practice. A few minutes later Yusuf asked the Brahui to examine his shoulder: blood was flowing freely, but as he complained of no hindrance to his breathing, and as the bullet had passed through a bandolier before its entrance, it seemed unlikely that any great harm had been done. They roughly bandaged the wound and relieved Yusuf of a rifle and a bandolier before they set off once more. Babar Nika was twenty miles distant, and if nothing occurred to delay them they should be there with the first light: there was no other Afghan post in the vicinity which could be turned out to intercept their flight, and it would be many hours before the men of Haodak had recovered their arms from the well. At the end of two hours Yusuf's bandage wanted readjusting: and an hour later he was more honest and demanded a rest without proffering any excuse. They allowed him thirty minutes, and relieved him of his second rifle and bandolier: with occasional halts he continued for two hours more, and then he seemed quite unable to move another yard: but his brain was still active. They had arrived at the gorge of the Shirinab: at their feet the clearest and sweetest river in all that countryside flowed gently south over a bed of clean, grey sand and shingle, and formed the border between British and Afghan territory. To the right the land of the Amir rose in beetling bluffs of composite to a height of over three hundred feet, and beyond towering masses of crag, relieved by a few stunted olive-trees, threw grim shadows in the moonlight. The bank of the river on the left was no less forbidding, but it hid a stony plain which stretched as far as Babar Nika, and, could Yusuf but get the information to the post, the cavalry detachment would be out in almost no time. The first thing to do was to move to a better position: their present one was as bad as possible for meeting an attack, and there was no certainty that they would not be attacked before help arrived: moreover, they were not yet undisputably in British territory, and, if it came to a fight, it would be a solid asset afterwards to be able to say that they had been attacked on their own side of the border.

The Brahui went up, and the Mando Khel down, the stream to search for a place to

ascend the left bank, and the latter soon returned with the good news that there was one not far off. With considerable trouble and a great deal of pain Yusuf was got to the top just as the first signs of dawn were streaking the sky. He sent off the Mando Khel to Babar Nika and gave him very exact instructions as to the road he should follow: the latter seemed surprised, but promised to comply. He had not been gone more than an hour when the sound of footsteps on the shingle of the river-bed told Yusuf that the *sudbashi* was on his tracks, and the Brahui who had been on the look-out arrived shortly after with confirmation. The *khassadars* did not look very happy, and, if *moral* was of any account, they were not very formidable. Many of them had been quite long enough at the bottom of the well to get thoroughly chilled, and now they were in quest of the *sudbashi's* rifle, which did not interest them in the least. To describe them as mutinous would raise a fine point, but they were as near that condition as people living in their state of permanent indiscipline can ever be said to be. The *sudbashi* led the way, and the tracks were not hard to follow: arrived at the foot of the ascent he looked up, but Yusuf gave no sign, and the Brahui had gone to guard against the possibility of an advance from up-stream. It was an ugly position for a man to face alone, and two men would find it hard to advance abreast: on the other hand, the *sudbashi* had no good reason to expect that his progress would be opposed. But his only hope in taking up the pursuit had been that some mischance might delay his quarry, and, if this had happened and they were compelled to fight a rearguard action, there was no place more likely for them to choose than the one in front of him. The very fact that the tracks there left the bed of the stream was suspicious, for it formed the shortest and easiest road to Babar Nika. He collected his party and disposed half in positions to cover his advance while he led the remainder on the line of the footprints. Yusuf waited until they were well committed to the climb, and then he tipped over with his foot a boulder which had been placed ready for him. The *khassadars* scuttled like a lot of rabbits to cover amongst the rocks by the river, but the *sudbashi* kept his position, looking up with rifle ready in hand.

"May you never be tired, O Kizilbash!" cried Yusuf. "You have done a great night's work, and your men must all be water-rats to have recovered their rifles so quickly from that well."

"May you, too, never be tired!"[1] replied the *sudbashi*. "Never more tired than you are now, for I know it is utter

[1] "May you never become poor!" is the common response, but the above is also used.

weariness and not the desire to meet me that keeps you where you are."

"Mayhap it is, Bahadur! But I am very comfortable, and my position is a better one than yours. Get to your water-rats if you want to see Kabul again."

The Brahui had now returned from his reconnaissance, and a signal from Yusuf sent him to a small breastwork which had been built flanking the ascent. The *sudbashi* meanwhile had lain down and taken careful aim at where he imagined Yusuf to be. His shot went wide, and almost at the same moment a bullet from the Brahui's rifle passed close enough to make him retire to the less exposed position of the *khassadars*. These now started a wild fire, which soon slackened and then stopped altogether, probably from lack of ammunition.

"You do well," cried Yusuf, "to save your cartridges, for soon you will be able to fight with equal numbers."

"You may summon your scores and your hundreds, but they will avail you little when the Amir Sahib hears of the violation of his territory."

"We, too, dislike trespass, and I should be ashamed if a patrol from Babar Nika arrived to find you on our side of the border whilst I had a rifle and could use it. Do you hear me, O Kizilbash? You must cross to the Afghan side of the stream or I shall commence using this beautiful rifle of yours."

There was no reply, and Yusuf continued:

"I shall aim at your left leg, and soon you will know whether your rifle is a good one or not. Ah! You have moved, but I can still see you behind your rock."

Yusuf's movements were slow and his hand none too steady, but, with the help of a friendly stone to support his rifle, he managed to send his shot very close to the back of the Kizilbash despite the boulder behind which the latter hid. A feeble volley came in reply, and apparently exhausted the few remaining rounds of the *khassadars*.

"I like the rifle," cried Yusuf, "so I hope you will bring the prisoners to-morrow without fail, for every day will increase my hatred to parting with it."

Another shot sent the *sudbashi* so close against his boulder that it was hard to determine whether he was visible or not.

"'Tis a sweet game," continued Yusuf. "If I hit, I but return you what is your own, and if I miss, the loss is yours. But I hear the horses of the Babar Nika patrol. Cross the stream, O Sudbashi! Or they may attack you, and I wish you no harm until you have delivered your prisoners. Behold I put the rifle outside my cover as a token of my good faith."

No sooner did the *khassadars* see the rifle in a safe position than they dashed across the stream, and, although he made a pretence of reluctance, the

sudbashi lagged little behind and took excellent cover on the Afghan side.

The Mando Khel had met the Babar Nika patrol some four miles from the post, and the fact that they had three spare horses explained for him the minuteness of Yusuf's instructions. They had been coming along at a medium pace when the sound of firing brought them up at a gallop, and Yusuf had to employ a deal of persuasion to prevent their joining battle with the *khassadars*. He once more impressed upon the *sudbashi* where his only hope of recovering his rifle lay, and then he returned with the patrol. He did not, however, enter the post. Even had he escaped the eagle eye of the *manjawar*, he could have had his wound treated nowhere in the Anambar district without the fact being carried across the border and causing trouble sooner or later to Muhammad Akbar. That night he spent with the Mando Khel a couple of miles down-stream from Babar Nika, and it was not until his arrival at Tank four days later that he was properly treated. There he was only one of a hundred thousand *powindahs*, and few even knew his name, and no one cared to ask how he came by his wound.

The day after the pursuit the two prisoners were brought to Babar Nika and exchanged for the *sudbashi's* rifle, but Shah Gul never recovered from his wound, and died six weeks later on his way from Anambar to his home in Peshin. But the surprise of Haodak saved the life of his fellow-prisoner and recovered the carbines which no amount of diplomacy would ever have extracted from the Afghan officials. It served, too, another purpose, for the *sudbashi's* pride received so great a blow that he made his presence less felt in the district, and gave up entirely his visits to Muhammad Akbar. He had no suspicion of the latter's complicity, but he hated the thought of meeting a Nasr who might know how he had been bearded by another of that tribe. A month later his influence at Kabul procured his transfer, and the danger to Karima was definitely at an end.

E. L.

"WAFTAGE."

"Our high admiral
Shall waft them over with our royal fleet."
—SHAKESPEARE, *3rd Henry VI.*, iii. 3.

NAVAL wars which were only naval have been at all times rare. We have fought but one—the first of our three struggles with the Dutch in the seventeenth century. In that conflict we won by sea fights alone. Even in the second, though our soldiers and the Dutch took no direct part save when they did duty as marines, the army of Louis XIV. hung in the background, and its influence was felt on the mind and the policy of John de Witt if nowhere else. Exceptions there have always been and to everything, but the rule is proved by their rarity. It is that, when a Sea Power has been at war, the navy has been used first to beat off invasion when it was opposed by a force like to itself, and then when command of the sea was won, to carry soldiers or cover the carrying by transports of troops sent out to assail the enemy on land. Wars have been fought by Sea Powers in which there has been no struggle for the command of the sea—the superiority of naval force on the one side being too great to allow of opposition by the other. It was so in the Crimean War and the Boer War, and is so to-day.

Without the aid of the Navy the troops could not pass oversea. They would stand for ever an unsatisfied Troilus—

"Like a strange soul upon the Stygian banks
Staying for waftage."

And waftage is a good word, though out of fashion. "Not in use," as Dr Johnson notes. But it can be brought back to use, and ought to be. We want it to "say for short," instead of "carriage by water or air," or this or the other lumbering phrase employed to define the "functions of Sea Power." The Navy "wafts." It carries through the air in its airships, or on the water, and is a wafter. It buoys. It makes to float. It hinders from sinking. It beckons and informs by a sign of anything moving. Where its own direct action stops at the water's edge it lands the army—and the army completes the work.

The method of the execution has varied widely according to such commanding conditions as the nature of the ship, the quality of the armaments, the resources of the State. In the modern world which arose out of the disintegration of the Roman Empire, the sharp distinction between ship for war and ship for trade, sea fighter and land fighter, was drawn very late. The Middle Ages had ships for war, but used

them for trade when by chance there was peace, and they were few. When war came, then all sorts and conditions of ships were "stayed" —embargoed. Knights, squires, "noble youths," archers and spearmen, were put into them. The master and his mariners saw to the navigation and helped the martial men to fight. These landsmen could be trusted to form the great majority of the crews when a naval battle was an affair of boarding, and the use of the white arm. When Edward III. fell on the Spaniards off Winchelsea, his shipmen laid him alongside an enemy — not the one he wished to board, but the one they knew they could fetch. The knights and so forth did the rest. When the enemy was to be attacked on land, the great majority of every crew was put ashore to raid or march up country to conquer. There was a very real danger in this depletion of the ships' companies. If, when the fighting men were ashore, the enemy should turn up from the sea fresh and fasting, what then? What would happen was very prettily shown in the course of the obscure wars between the famous Hanse League and that King of Denmark, Waldemar, who was surnamed Atterdag — that is, "another day." He was not in the habit of putting off work to another day, but of saying, when things went wrong with him, that "a day would come" when he would have his chance. On a certain occasion the Hanse fleet was carrying out operations against the Danish king's territory. They had landed their fighting men to attack a town, leaving their ships in charge of a mere watch. While they were expecting nothing less, Waldemar swooped down on them, and huge disaster ensued. When the admirals did reach home with the remains their angry masters cut their heads off.

It was a leading case, but nobody paid it much attention. The Elizabethans, in their Island and West Indian voyages, behaved exactly as the Hanse admirals had done —and with impunity, because the enemy was never ready. Yet once in the Queen's reign there was lively anxiety at home lest just such an overthrow as that of the Hanse admirals should befall one English armament. It was in 1595, when Drake and Hawkins were on their last voyage to the West Indies. They had Baskerville with them; and the plan was that he was to land, cross the mountains, and sack the Spanish treasure-house at Panama on the South Sea. He would inevitably take the bulk of the men with him. News came to England that Philip II. had for once found means to send a fleet in pursuit, and the anxiety of the wiser sort was lively. We have testimony to the agitation of the authorities at home in a letter dated the 30th November written by Raleigh and addressed to the Lord High

Admiral Howard of Effingham. Sir Walter vehemently urged that if reinforcements could not be sent at once, then two quick boats should be hurried off with a warning.

"The charge wilbe small to the Queen," he wrote, knowing well where the Elizabethan shoe pinched, "and it may save all her ships and people in that action. For as sure as God lives, if the Spanish arrive while the soldiers are over lande, bothe the ships att ancor [on the east side of the isthmus] and thos [*i.e.*, men who had marched over] at Panama wilbe both lost."

The ships would be almost wholly unmanned and would be easily overpowered. The soldiers cut off in Spanish territory would be destroyed by fever and hunger if not by the sword. Raleigh's fears, though sagacious, were unfounded. The expedition reached the isthmus late, and already weakened by loss at Porto Rico, by the ravages of "country fevers" or "calentures" and scurvy. Hawkins was already dead, Drake was dying. Baskerville did indeed land, but he found the passes well fortified and strongly held by a Spanish force under a "Low Country officer," that is to say, a veteran Spaniard of the Netherland wars. He was repulsed, and some of his men were cut off by Indians, from whom, relying on Drake's old friendship with them and the runaway negro slaves the Maroons, he had looked for aid. The game was up before the Spanish fleet appeared. Baskerville, to whom the command fell when Drake died, had a scrambling affair with it near the Island of Pines, at the west end of Cuba, while he was on his way home by the Straits of Florida. Yet it was more by luck than good guidance that the disaster Sir Walter feared was averted. The lesson was not to be neglected, and when the English next came to the West Indies in force it was not with a fleet-army, but an army escorted by a fleet. The great Cromwellian adventure of 1655, had Penn for General at sea and Venables for General ashore. It failed at San Domingo, and badly, but it did take Jamaica and win that footing in the West Indies which it was sent to secure. The fleet contributed a naval brigade to the operations ashore in San Domingo, and it won the only honour gained in that scandalous business. But on the whole the sea service did its own work, and the soldiers, when they had recovered from their San Domingo panic, did their part well in Jamaica. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth" for their good. The smaller island was the more manageable, the more healthy, the more defensible, even the better placed. If we did not win what we desired, we did get what was best for us. An earnest Puritan divine might have found here a text for refreshing and savoury discourse.

'The Early Military Life of General Sir George Napier,' edited by his son, General W. C. E. Napier, is a little book not so well known as it de-

serves to be. The least famous of the Napier brothers was just such a man as one would select to present to the world as the type of the very best British soldier officer. He had his modest share of the literary faculty of Sir Charles and Sir William, and if he was weaker, the inferiority lay rather in this, that he had less passion, than that he had less intelligence than they. We have to thank him for this so to speak embodiment in a picture of the symbolical order, of the inward and spiritual brotherhood of the Navy and the Army. In 1806 Sir George was on his way to the Mediterranean, suffering, so he records, unspeakable miseries from sea-sickness. He was once reduced to so deep a level of feebleness that when a frigate ran into the transport in which he was making his passage and everybody rushed to scramble aboard her lest their own vessel should sink, he lay still below, being so prostrate that drowning passively seemed preferable to the agony of making an effort. Those who know by personal suffering, or have seen from the crushed condition of others, what an infernal affliction extreme sea-sickness can be, will feel for Sir George. In an interval of fair weather he saw this, and by his good offices we see it.

"In a few days the weather cleared up, and on a fine bright morning, the anniversary of the glorious battle of Trafalgar, on the very spot where that greatest of all naval battles was fought the year before, in which the immortal Nelson fell as he had lived, the pride of England's Navy and the successful conqueror and destroyer of the fleets of France, did we meet that same *British Fleet* under the command of that excellent, skilful, gallant and good man Lord Collingwood. Immediately the signal was made by our commander Sir Thomas Duckworth for the ships of the convoy to pass under the Admiral's stern, the soldiers dressed and paraded on the decks with bands playing 'Rule Britannia' and colours flying, and as we passed our colours dropped, and presenting arms, we gave three hearty cheers, the fine, sailor-like old admiral taking off his hat and bowing to us, his own brave crew and the rest of his fleet returning our cheers with loud huzzahs. My ship, in which was our band, was curiously enough called the Collingwood after him, and had a fine large figure of the admiral at her head painted in full uniform, and we led the van in this well-merited compliment as Collingwood himself had led the van in the battle. I never felt more elated or saw a finer sight."

Now this is one of those reminiscences of which we can say that if it had been invented it would still have been true. That this or the other transport carrying whatever officers or men you please ran under the stern of the flagship and saluted the admiral was an incident and might be naught. But in that place and at that time the scene which so justly elated Sir George was symbolical and true to the essential realities and the spirit, which alone matter. Collingwood standing there on the gallery of the *Royal Sovereign* receiving and returning the salute of the army was a type. The navy had done its own work. It had cleared the way, and now by the hand of him who was

the foremost man in it since that unforgettable scene in the cockpit of the *Victory* one year before, it passed on the torch to those to whom fell the duty of completing the task. Henceforth what the navy had to do was to "waft" the army, keep its road open for reinforcements and supplies, and when the victory was won to bring it back.

That work was but too often done in conditions which were very little if at all better than the transport of kidnapped blacks from the Slave Coast to the West Indies. The soldiers could not be carried in the warships. They would have hampered the gun-decks in action, and the loss of life would have been frightful. The sight of the awful slaughter in some of the French frigates which were captured while trying to carry reinforcements to Egypt was too much even for men trained in the hard sea life of the time. And yet it was better to make a swift end so than to perish slowly in the squalor of the average transports of those times. They were but merchant ships of from 150 to 250 tons. A 500-tonner was a giant. Smollett notes that there were only four feet between decks in the vessels which carried the expedition to Carthagena. Men were crowded nearly as close as blacks in a slaver. And what is even more shocking to think of is that the women "on the strength" and their children went with the regiment. We are too apt to think of the Carthagena horror as an exception. The suffering was more noted only because the enterprise failed. The loss by disease was nearly as great in the successful attack on Havannah at the end of the Seven Years' War. Victory covered the misery from the eyes of all but a few. Dr Johnson, whose eyes were not to be blinded and whose heart was kind, spoke of the Havannah expedition with positive loathing. He prayed that his country might never buy glory at such a price again. Long afterwards no more humanity nor sense was shown in the treatment of the troops. Philip Beaver, who as a naval officer saw the condition of the army which sailed to the coast of Spain in 1800, has left notes of his observations which are little less revolting than Smollett's narrative. Part of the army had been engaged in making futile demonstrations against Ferrol and Vigo. The transports were so overcrowded that it was not possible to give all the soldiers cover between decks. They slept on the upper deck wrapped in their blankets, and the women and children pigged with them in the rain and the cold damp sea air. Putrid fevers, dysentery, rheumatism, pneumonia, and scurvy raged among them, officers and men alike. Two long stoppages—one at Malta, one at Marmorice Bay—were needed to restore the health of the troops. There was no more than the exact truth in Dr Johnson's sonor-

ous enumeration of the evils of war :—

"A very small part [of those who died therein, to wit] ever felt the stroke of an enemy; the rest languished in tents and ships amid damps and putrefactions; pale, torpid, spiritless, helpless, groping and groaning unpitied among men, made obdurate by long continuance of hopeless misery, and were at last whelmed in pits or heaved into the ocean, without notice and without remembrance. By incommodious encampments and unwholesome stations where courage is useless and enterprise impracticable, fleets were silently dispeopled and armies sluggishly melted away."

That was a true tale when the famous West India expedition of 1585 came back more than half unmanned, bringing among the survivors not a few who were crippled and imbecile for life. And it was true when the navy re-embarked the wreck of an army at Walcheren in 1809. We have altered all that for the better, whatever else may have grown worse. The men who went down in the *Royal Edward* in the Ægean on the 14th August died by "the stroke of the enemy." In the fine steamer taken from the Mediterranean and Atlantic passenger traffic which was carrying them to the Dardanelles they were not left to be destroyed by disease. There is something positively awful in the calm with which Dr Johnson records the miseries of soldiers and sailors "groping and groaning *unpitied among men.*"

The Doctor often spoke for effect. He did not write for it. He was stating what he well knew to be the truth in the words here quoted, and observe that he seems to accept the absence of "pity" for the sufferings of sailors and soldiers in the wars of his time as natural. He was well justified in his assumption. The seventeenth century built almshouses not a few—Greenwich Hospital among them. The men of the eighteenth century were proud of their "feelings," their "sensibility." They could be kind enough to the worn-out soldier, or the crippled tar, whom they saw in the flesh and on a wooden leg before their eyes. But as for taking precautions in time to see that the "heroes," as they were quite ready to call them, were not worn out or crippled by preventable causes —the need of that foresight did not begin to suggest itself till very late, and then to admirals, of whom Rodney was the first, who understood that a sickly crew is a weak crew. The general view would rather appear to have been that of speakers in the House of Commons who stated as a self-evident truth, which no reasoning being could dispute, that no man who had any other way of earning enough to eat would consent to be a soldier. It was in the nature of things that this should be so, and what was the good of talking?

There was a move towards better things during the great revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. Sir Henry Bunbury, whose 'Narratives of Some Passages in the Great War with France' is one of the most readable and rational of military histories, tells how, at

the very beginning, when an effort to aid the House of Orange was to be made in a hurry,

"about 1700 of the foot guards, with a few score of artillerymen, were all that could be mustered for that service in the days of the crisis. But of proper vessels to transport them across the sea there were none. The troops were huddled on the 25th of February on board of such empty colliers as could be found in the Thames, and by great good fortune they reached the coast of Holland without loss."

He could record a relative improvement during the expedition to Egypt in 1801. A serious attempt was made in that case to provide adequate transport.

"The troopships," says Sir Henry, "then in use were for the most part old two-deckers, sixty-fours or fifties, without their lower deck guns. It was a badly arranged service, and equally disagreeable to the officers of the army and the navy, who were always quarrelling."

Sir Henry was an excellent authority, for not only was he a man of sense and humour, but he saw as much of this business of waftage as any officer of his time.

Long after 1801, the methods followed were still of the old hand-to-mouth order. When Sir John Moore was sent on that astonishing expedition to Sweden in 1808 he had with him "from 11,000 to 12,000 men," with all their guns, baggage, and stores. In his Diary he says:—

"Our armament will consist when collected of about 180 sail. The transports are so small that it takes seven or eight of them to hold one regiment. For a mere passage this is of less importance, but I have represented to Lord Castlereagh how unwieldy and unmanageable we shall be if required to act upon the enemy's coast; for this latter purpose troopships or transports, coppered, and of a large construction, are alone fit. Twenty or twenty-five might carry this whole expedition, sail well, be amenable to signal, fit to carry each a couple of flat-bottomed boats and to man them when required. Unless some plan of this kind is adopted we shall not be able to carry on a littoral warfare or be able to avail ourselves of our naval superiority."

Moore, naturally enough, does not say what he considered a vessel of large construction. The standard was modest when the great majority of merchant ships were of 90 to 250 tons, when a West Indiaman of 500 was "a stately ship," and when there were very few of larger size except the 800 and 1400 tonners of the East India Company, of which again there was but a handful. But if a troopship was a 50-gun ship of the navy, armed *en flûte*—that is to say, with the upper deck guns only—then she was of about 1000 tons by the measurement of the time. So twenty or twenty-five thousand tons of shipping was in Moore's opinion (and in 1808 his experience was wide) enough to carry 11,000 to 12,000 soldiers with horses and other belongings, plus their crews, which would not be less in all than 3000 to 3500. But this was a counsel of perfection. The general practice was always to use the swarm of small vessels. Nor could it be avoided when the trade did

not provide a sufficient number of craft of "large construction."

Small or not so small, with more or less regard for health and decency, the "wafters" of the British army made first and last a great host between 1793 and 1815. At any given moment a large part of the British army was always sure to be afloat in those years.

Our soldiers may have had, we can indeed be sure they had, no more love for the relatively habitable "troop-ship," or the miserable little hooker which carried its humble seventh part of a regiment, than their French rivals had for what they called *les sacrés sabots*—which is, being rightly interpreted, the blasted clogs or wooden shoes. That is "sacred" which has been smitten by the lightning of the gods. For them there was no question of the huge steamer of thousands, or now and then of tens of thousands of tons, which could go steadily on through calms and head winds. They crawled in narrow flat-bottomed tubs, which were held to have done decently when they averaged their three knots an hour, which lay sluggishly quiescent in calms, or rolled and pitched and "scended" horribly in capfuls of wind, or were blown off shore, or on to lee shores, or were scattered far and wide by gales. Happily for them they looked for nothing better.

The amount of such active and passive work—active for the sailor and passive for the soldier—done in the twenty-two years of the Great War was enormous. There was always, of course, the steady taking out of reliefs and bringing home of the relieved as in peace, and there were the endless expeditions. When the British army was being allowed to do something substantial and consecutive in the Low Countries, or Egypt, or Spain, there was an everlasting coming and going of transports. That was satisfactory enough, and soon settled down to normal routes. But there were for years ventures of a very different character, wherein thousands of men were idly employed. One wonders what the soldiers and sailors thought of it all, say of such things as the above-mentioned mission to Sweden. Perhaps the soldiers did not think at all, except that they were sent and were called back. Perhaps to the sailors the voyage was just a voyage like another. And yet one feels that average human nature must have become impatient at being sent to Gothenburg, not to do some definite thing, but just to try whether something doable might not turn up. It meant being packed into a very small vessel, and kept there for weeks in sight for much of the time of the shore without leave to land, pervading damp, nights spent in fog and drizzle, lying on deck in a thinnish blanket, salt horse to eat, no room to stretch your legs, cockroaches and scurvy. At the end, home again, with much suffered and nothing done. Sir Henry Bun-

bury once heard "a private of the 27th chaunting in a sarcastic tone—

'The King of France with thirty thousand men
Marched up the hill, and then marched down again.'"

He was a critic, and he assuredly was not the only one. In time his views were completely expressed by Sir Charles Pasley in his 'Military Policy and Institutions of the British Empire.' The navy was not always friendly in the course of these futile operations. When Pulteney was sent, really by no fault of his own, doddering (there is no other word for it) along the coast of Spain in 1800, the sailors, we are told, taunted the "lobsters" for their failure at Ferrol. Their naval wit was very ill employed. The soldiers landed, and from the top of a hill they saw a regular fortress which could not be taken except by a regular siege, and they had none of the means needed for the work. They could but go back to the ships. If the navy had been asked why it did not force a way into the harbour of Ferrol through the fortified straits, it would have answered that the thing could not be done. The blame for the failure lay on the Government which sent small armaments to do what could be done only by great ones, or sent them "fishing" for some unknown capture, which went on doing no better till Spain and Portugal provided a useful field of battle, and did not quite give up even then. In vain did the criticism of Abercromby, Moore, and Craig bray its schemes in critical mortars. Futility would not depart from them.

With all this on which the historian waxes eloquent, the pervasion of the world by the British navy, which carried or protected the carriers of the British army, and by the army which was carried from the West Indies to Java between 1793 and 1815, is one of the great, it might even without absurdity be called the greatest of all, spectacles in the history of war. A very strong memory, and a knowledge which few have had occasion to acquire, would be taxed to give an approximately accurate list on a sudden call. Put aside the captures, and on certain occasions the failures to capture, this or that island, leave a veil over the deplorable affair at Quiberon and some others, agree to say nothing of Hood and O'Hara at Toulon, allow with every possible emphasis that there was futility and waste of efforts, and when you have omitted and allowed and denounced, there remains a wonderful display of energy prolonged for twenty years by a population of about a fourth of what is included in the British Isles to-day, apart from the Colonies. The great and memorable expeditions (not all of them successful) of those years excel the enterprises of whole centuries. There were two to the West Indies, Jervis and Grey, Christian and Abercromby; two to the Low Countries in 1793 and 1799; two to

the Cape, one before one after the Peace of Amiens; two to the River Plate in 1806 and 1807; the conquest of Java, the conquest of the Mauritius, the cruisings and prowlings of Moore, Pulteney, Craig; two invasions of Egypt, Abercromby's success and Fraser's failure; occupations of Minorca and Sicily; the long-drawn-out war in Spain, on the West coast and the East; operations in Italy and the Ionian Islands; attacks successful or the reverse on Washington and New Orleans. There was the transport of the Portuguese royal family and Government to Brazil, and the rescue of Romana's Spanish division from Denmark. It would be impossible to be complete without reaching to the dimensions of a catalogue.

In a Naval History it is natural to dwell on the battles and victories, and of course without victory in battle the rest could not have been done. But it is difficult to make a list of twelve naval battles in twenty-two years, even if you include Hotham's affairs in the Gulf of Lyons, Duckworth's engagement in the West Indies, and Hoste's frigate action (a most brilliant business) off Lissa. Battle was the exception, and it was the easiest part of the work. Collingwood counted it as a trifle when compared to blockade. In reality blockade and the kindred duty of "waftage" were the real day's work and daily bread of the navy. And the victories won at sea between 1793 and 1815 were so effectual that there have been no more of them for the British Navy. No real battle has been fought in this war, for the affairs in the Heligoland Bight, off Coronel, and near the Falkland Islands do not amount to so much. What the Navy has been doing, and what to all seeming it is condemned to do to the end, has been and will be to keep the road open for the soldiers, to France, to the Dardanelles, to the Euphrates Valley, and to "waft them over."

DAVID HANNAY.

MINING AND DEMOLITION IN WAR.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR G. K. SCOTT MONCRIEFF, K.C.B., C.I.E.

AMONG the many miscellaneous subjects which make up the mental equipment of a military engineer, there are three which are fundamental. He must know how to organise the temporary fortification of any locality, with a given number of troops as a garrison; he must know how to make pontoon bridges, or other temporary means for crossing rivers; and, last but not least, he must know how to mine, and, by means of explosives, to destroy. Other subjects there are about which he is expected to know more than a little — such as the permanent fortification of coast harbours; the construction of barracks, hospitals, and other similar buildings; the provision of water supplies; the uses of electricity in telegraphy and lighting; and a long list of other miscellaneous topics. But in all these he may fairly claim that his knowledge is not that of an expert, and that certain of his professional colleagues have made one or other of these more or less a speciality, just in the same way as a doctor may be a very good all-round practitioner, and yet, without any confession of weakness, refer a patient suffering from some specific complaint to a specialist in that particular disease.

No military engineer, however, has any excuse of ignorance on the three main branches of his art above indicated; and indeed from earliest times, long before the invention of "villainous saltpetre," the work of rude defences, of the passage of rivers, and of destroying the resources of the foe, have formed part of the duty of such inventive genius as might be called into play with bodies of men engaged in warfare. Early history, indeed, would seem to indicate that in primitive times every fighting man was more or less acquainted with the above, and it was only as the study of war advanced that certain men were set apart for such work. In medieval times in England these men were frequently monks or other members of the clerical profession, the title of their chief being "Ingeniator" or "Attilator," and subsequently, in honest English, "King's Trench Master," while the rank and file appear in old chronicles as "Operarii" and "Minerarii."

Of the three duties above mentioned, the last is perhaps the most important, and, in spite of its antiquity, the least practised in peace manœuvres with other branches of the army. The reason for this is not far to seek, for in the ordinary times of peace it is obviously impossible to blow up bridges and wreck the houses of peaceful subjects of

the King; and the actual construction of military mines, with their vertical "shafts" and horizontal "galleries," is a tedious and uninteresting operation to the bystander.

Furthermore, there is always the uncertainty of how far the *débris* of an explosion will reach. A gun loaded with a given projectile and fired with certain charges and elevation will behave in a manner that is amenable to calculation, but no mortal mathematician can calculate and no prophet can foretell what will happen to the fragments of a bridge that is destroyed by an explosion, and the wandering course of such miscellaneous articles as the heads of rivets or fragments of concrete may possibly produce accidents that are serious. Hence it rarely happens that fireworks of this sort are part of the regular routine of a general's inspection.

There is, in addition, the curious psychological fact that many men, in handling explosives, begin by regarding them with unreasonable fear, and then after a short stage of respectful and intelligent use, become dangerously reckless. This familiarity, carried to a careless extreme, has caused the death of many a gallant man, both in civil and military life, and the tendency to this carelessness is one which every responsible officer has continually to bear in mind.

Possibly it was owing to these practical difficulties that, some forty years ago, the instruction given to young officers at our military schools stopped short at the actual making up and firing of explosive charges. Much that was useful was taught theoretically, and also a good deal of sound practice, such as the making of shafts and galleries through treacherous soil, the keeping direction and level in the dark cramped branches of a mine, and the use of apparatus for working in mines with a vitiated atmosphere. But the actual handling of fuzes and explosives was left to the instructor. This method of teaching had, of course, the advantage that it avoided risk of accident to all concerned; but it led to the possibility of young officers having to go on service without the practical knowledge of their work, and confidence in their own power of doing it, that is essential, and so the risk, not only to themselves but to the troops with whom they might be associated, would be of infinitely greater importance than risks of accidents in peace time, even though coroners' inquests might appear an unpleasant possibility.

We have changed all this nowadays, and also we have changed another and most important matter—viz., the condition and quality of the apparatus and of the explosives used. Electricity is now largely used for firing, and the risks of accident are thereby much reduced; but, in addition, the various stores used are now periodically examined and kept in good order.

It was not always so: as I write, the remembrance of the loss of two brave brother

officers comes to mind. When the little army under Lord Roberts fought its way into Kabul in October 1879, after defeating the Afghans at the battle of Charasia, one of the first places to be occupied in the enemy's capital was the Bala Hissar, the citadel of the city. This fortress, which dominates the whole of Kabul, is in two parts, one of which contained (and may still do so for aught I know) the principal residences of the Amir and nobility, the halls of justice and government offices, &c., while the other contained the military stores of the Afghan army. The latter was situated on an eminence above the former, with strong escarpments and bastions, reaching on two sides to a moat.

Here on the afternoon of October the 16th a violent explosion occurred. The cause of this was unknown, but as one of the victims was Captain Shafto, the Commissary of Ordnance to the little force, it may be fairly assumed that he was at the time taking over some of the captured stores, and that possibly owing to careless handling on the part of some of his subordinates, some powder became ignited. Fortunately the main magazine was intact, otherwise the explosion, bad though it was, might have had even more disastrous consequences. Lord Roberts, therefore, gave orders that the contents of the magazine were to be removed and destroyed. This duty was entrusted to the senior R.E. subaltern, Lieutenant Nugent, a capable and smart officer. The task was by no means an easy one, for the powder was contained in earthenware jars, of a shape which was inconceivably unsuitable for safe handling. In fact they could only maintain a vertical position by leaning against one another, and as the earthenware of which they were made was very brittle, the chances of the powder being spilt were infinite. Nugent, however, was equal to the task, and by conveying the jars singly, wrapped in sacking, to the edge of the moat, he lowered them into the water below by ropes and tackle. The work had to be done very carefully, and it took about six weeks before the whole contents of the magazine, minus a certain amount retained for our own use, was safely deposited at the bottom of the moat.

During those weeks, it must be admitted that the energies of the army were mainly directed to making itself comfortable for the winter, without any fear of, or precaution against, a possible hostile attack. At the beginning of November the whole force had moved into the Sherpur cantonments, a long range of casemated barracks about two miles from the city. These barracks, built evidently for defensive purposes, furnished, with two low hills in rear, a fairly good position; but the idea of being attacked there never apparently occurred to any one. For this reason various villages lying

within easy reach of the walls were left untouched. Now every village in Afghanistan is a fortress, more or less, with solid outer walls, and high towers at the angles.

Then suddenly the storm broke. Early in December the Afghans assembled in tens of thousands. After some three days of gallant fighting, the little British force had to retire inside the defensive position and fight for its existence.

Orders were given for the demolition of the villages. Then an appalling discovery was made. The supplies of time-fuze for firing the charges were found to be ample in quantity, but utterly useless in quality.

Here it may be as well to explain that (the use of electricity at that time being unknown) the usual time-fuze used for firing charges of explosives consisted then, as now, of an inner core of powder, burning at the rate of about a yard a minute, protected by a sheath of hemp and waterproof covering, the object of which is to protect the core from moisture, and to enable it to burn in spite of the external pressure of the earth "tamping," with which the charge is covered. This "tamping" is necessary in gunpowder (though not in high explosives, which are much more rapid in their action), the object being to prevent the gases produced by the explosion from being dissipated in the atmosphere. The appearance of this safety fuze is that of a thin and somewhat stiff black rope.

The stuff that the Ordnance Department had taken to Kabul must have been lying in some Indian arsenal for years, and no doubt, when the campaign began, that which had been in store for the longest period was issued first, so as to get rid of it and have it replaced by some fresh material. Who was responsible for this could never be known. Poor Shafto had been killed, and no one else could give any account of it. Anyhow, it was so utterly rotten that not a yard of it could be trusted to burn. Not even the expedient of putting more than one fuze in a charge, on the chance of one proving sound, was found to be of any use.

What was to be done? There was no use saying the problem was insoluble, though the means of a satisfactory solution were inadequate. One ingenious youth put a big charge behind a wall, and then set fire to the adjacent houses. This method had its uncertainties and its limitations. The explosion occurred in course of time, but at a very inopportune moment, and the general was very much annoyed.

Then Nugent came to the rescue with some fuze which he had improvised out of cotton thread and gunpowder. It burned steadily enough, though it threw off little sparks in various directions, but it could not be "tamped," for the pres-

sure of earth round it extinguished it. However, it was a great improvement on anything else we had tried.

He and I were detailed one day to blow up one of the most formidable of these adjacent village forts. We took an ample quantity of powder, partly because we did not know accurately what its strength was, it being part of the material brought from the Bala Hissar, and partly because we thought that, in the absence of tamping, we should require extra charges to bring the walls down. We placed the charges at the back of the wall, in the semi-darkness of an Afghan house, and allowed a fair length of the fuzes, which we lighted simultaneously.

Just as we had done this our Colonel (the late Sir Æneas Perkins) came up and hurriedly approved. There was indeed no alternative, as the fuzes were now sputtering and sparking steadily. We made our way quickly to the flat tops of some adjacent houses to await the progress of events. We had not long to wait, for with a crash and roar the powder exploded, sending showers of bricks, beams of timber, and black clouds of dust all over us. Much to the Colonel's relief, expressed forcibly, we were all three quite uninjured, and, much to our chagrin, so was the wall. The powder had followed the line of least resistance, and had blown sky-high the roofs, &c., of the adjacent houses, but in the absence of tamping the main walls still were intact and as serious a menace to our position as before.

Nugent's handsome face was clouded with care as we returned to our lines. He said to me he would try the effect of making a few tin tubes in the R.E. Park (workshops and stores), so that the tin would protect the fuze from the earth tamping, and not interfere with its steady burning. He went away to give orders accordingly.

About two days later the enemy made their grand assault on our position. Early in the darkness of a winter morning, a signal-fire was lighted on the top of one of the mountains round the city, and then came what Sir Mortimer Durand has so graphically described:—

> "It came at last one wintry dawn, before the break of light,
> A sudden glare of beacon fires upon the southern height—
> A signal shot to east and west, and then with one wild swell,
> Pealed up from fifty thousand throats the Ghazis' battle yell,
> And the rifle flashes hemmed us round in one broad quivering ring,
> And overhead in fiery gusts the lead began to sing."

And so on for hours, the tide of attack surging up to our defences and breaking again like the waves on a rock.

By the afternoon the attacks had died down a bit, and then came the counter-attack. I happened to be in the R.E. Park for some tools, and there I found Nugent with a tin tube in his hand about a foot long. "What do you think

of this?" he said; "this ought to do the trick all right." He was just about to start with a company of sappers in the counter-attack, the command being under a senior R.E. officer, Captain Dundas. This very gallant officer had gained the Victoria Cross in a previous campaign by an act of extraordinary gallantry. He was as fine a specimen of a British officer as one could find anywhere. Courteous, chivalrous, considerate, he was one whom we subalterns all adored for his personal qualities, while we respected his great ability, for he had left a most important appointment in the civil administration (railways) to come on field service. I had special reason for regarding him with gratitude, for he had a few nights previously specially selected me to accompany him on dangerous duty—an honour of supreme value,—and I also knew some of his people in Edinburgh, where his father, a well-known judge, had the reputation of being the most cultured man in a society of the greatest intellectual refinement.

What happened when these gallant officers went to meet the enemy I did not actually see, as I was engaged elsewhere. I understand that in driving back the enemy, our troops had to pass some of the fortified villages, where the fire from the towers at the salient angles was especially galling. To clear away one of these obstacles the sappers were ordered to carry out its demolition by explosives. Captain Dundas probably superintended the operation only, the details of which were, most likely, under Nugent; but in accordance with the fine tradition of the Corps that, in cases of danger, the senior officer always remains to the last, Dundas remained until the fuzes were all lighted (there may have been only one, but probably there were more). Both officers had only gone a short distance towards a safe position when the explosion occurred, overwhelming them in the ruins of the tower, and life was extinct when their bodies were recovered. Neither of them were much injured (I saw both bodies afterwards), and this proves that they were not very near to the mine when it exploded, or they would have been blown to pieces. What had evidently happened was that in his anxiety to get a successful explosion, and it *was* perfectly successful, Nugent had placed in the gunpowder, the tube, through which the fuze passed, more or less vertical. The fuze burnt steadily to the edge of the tube and then a spark must have been thrown off, striking the interior of the tube, and falling into the powder below set off the whole. This would give the officers time to go a little way off, while the fuze was burning up to the edge of the tube, yet not sufficient time to get to a safe distance as would have been the case had the whole length of the fuze been effective.

Thus died two most gallant gentlemen, owing not to ignorance or carelessness, but to

the inefficient quality of the material they were given for the carrying out of their duties.

Some years later this episode had a curious sequel. There was in the newspapers one of those periodical controversies about the value of R.E. officers in civil life, which generally rise in a period of peace when the value of the military engineer in war is forgotten. As a rule one can afford to treat these letters with the silence which they deserve, but when one correspondent alleged (in support of the theory that occupation in a civil capacity unfitted an officer for war) that Captain Dundas, "though an officer of much merit as a civil administrator was so ignorant of his military duties that he threw away his valuable life by firing a mine with an improvised fuze of his own making," it was time to intervene. There was just enough truth in the statement to make it plausible, and yet the facts were absolutely wrong, and of course the argument worthless. A letter to the paper in question, written with official permission, settled the matter, and the correspondence ceased.

As may be supposed a service of danger of this description often leads to special distinction and reward.

In Queen Victoria's reign the first great military exploit was the capture of Ghazni, the great Afghan fortress between Kandahar and Kabul. The army of the Indus under Sir John Keane was marching from Kandahar on the capital, and after comparatively little difficulty found itself confronted by this formidable fortress and without any siege train for its attack. The chief engineer of the army advised the assault of the fortifications by the main gate, and the operation of blowing in this barrier was entrusted to Lieutenant Durand, afterwards Major-General Sir Henry Durand, who was killed accidentally in 1871, being at that time Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab.

The Gate of Ghazni was approached by a narrow winding roadway, lined on each side by a loop-holed wall, behind which the enemy were known to be on the alert. The little party, carrying the powder-bags and other apparatus, under Durand's orders, was discovered by the enemy when they were still 150 yards from their objective, but by dint of a bold rush they succeeded in reaching the gate without loss, and, what is perhaps even more remarkable, Durand succeeded in laying, tamping, and firing successfully the charge without loss to his own side. The gate was blown in, and the fortress assaulted successfully.

Had the Victoria Cross then been instituted, Durand would probably have received it, the feat he performed being very similar to one or two since then which have well earned that coveted distinction.

Of these the most famous is the blowing-in of the Cashmere gate at the siege of Delhi in 1857. This was of

course an incident in the assault on the city, not the main assault as in the Ghazni case, but the circumstances otherwise were very similar, in that it was carried out in the teeth of a strong hostile defence.

The officers concerned were Lieutenants Home and Salkeld, who with Sergeants Burgess, Smith, and Carmichael, Bugler Hawthorne, and some eight native sappers, advanced in the teeth of a withering hostile fire over a gap bridged by a single beam.

Home led the way over the gap, deposited the powder-bags against the gate, and dropped into the ditch unhurt. When Salkeld with his men arrived, the garrison, realising by this time what was being done, fired a deadly volley, at short range, on their assailants. Salkeld had completed the preparations and was about to apply the light to the mine, when he was shot through the arm and leg. He passed the port fire to Sergeant Burgess, who, however, was shot dead before he could apply it. Carmichael then dashed forward and succeeded in firing the train before he too was killed. Smith, finding the train had been fired, dropped into the ditch, where the bugler was crouching beside Salkeld. After a few anxious moments the explosion crashed out and the plucky little bugler sounded the advance for the stormers, who dashed in over the fallen *débris*.

Home survived only to fall a short time afterwards. Salkeld died of his wounds. Both were granted the V.C.

A monument, placed there by Field-Marshal Lord Napier of Magdala, now stands at the spot, telling of this heroic deed.

A somewhat similar deed of heroism, though connected with a war of far less magnitude and importance, was at the storming of Nilt, in the remote Himalayas in 1891. The troops on our side were a mere handful, only 1000 regulars, with about 200 locally raised levies, the whole commanded by Colonel Durand, son of the hero of Ghazni. The enemy were men of the Hunza Nagar tribe, a band of insolent marauders, who, trusting to the security of their mountain fastness, had defied the Imperial Government, and dared them to prevent them from carrying out plundering expeditions into the territories of peaceful neighbours. They based much of their defiance upon the fact that entrance to their own valley—a region surrounded by some of the highest mountains and greatest glaciers in the world—was barred by the fort of Nilt, a fortified village of somewhat the same type as those in Afghanistan, but with very special advantages of site, in that all round it the ground fell precipitously, except at the approach to the main gate, which was over a narrow causeway. On that side also there was a steep watercourse, which served as an additional outwork, and a belt of trees felled so as to form an *abattis*

or entanglement added to the security of the defence.

Attack by mountain artillery and infantry availed little against the massive, loop-holed walls of the mountain village, and so at last the order was given to assault and demolish the gateway. Supported by heavy fire on the walls, infantry soldiers of a Gurkha regiment, gallantly led by two subalterns, hacked a way through the *abattis*, and enabled a small party of sappers to rush for the gate. The officer in command of these, Captain Aylmer, laid his charge and lighted the fuze under a hot fire without being hit, and crawled away to a short distance to await the result. The fuze, however, went out, and at imminent risk the brave officer went back again, a target for many rifles, but, strange to say, again without mishap. A second time he lit the fuze, and withdrew. In a few seconds a roar followed, and the gate disappeared in a cloud of dust and *débris*. Aylmer and the Gurkhas charged in among the now desperately alarmed enemies, who fought with the courage of despair. Aylmer, who was badly wounded in the fighting which followed, was granted the Victoria Cross.

A somewhat analogous case occurred in 1902 at a spot about eight miles from the frontier post of Bannu. A small band of outlaws had been rounded up in a fortified village, or hamlet, whence they defied all attempts to capture them. They were well armed and good shots, and they knew all the stratagems of guerilla warfare, so it is not altogether surprising that they held at bay some 300 infantry with two guns, the latter being quite powerless against the thick walls of the fort. To dislodge them a sapper subaltern named Browne, who curiously enough was a relative of the great John Nicholson so well known at Bannu, was sent with his explosives. At first he was unperceived by the defenders, and he succeeded in laying and firing his charge without mishap, but it proved to be insufficient to make a breach in the very solid mud walls. A second time Browne advanced to lay another charge in the hollow left by the first explosion. This time he was naturally an object of very close attention to the defence. The mine again exploded successfully and a practicable entrance was formed, into which Browne rushed, followed by an assaulting column which soon disposed of the outlaws.

Browne was awarded the D.S.O. for this. It may be of interest to note that he now commands in France one of those field companies of R.E. which have done such conspicuous service since the present war broke out, and which has changed its commander, owing to death and wounds, more frequently probably than any unit in the army.

Although it is seldom possible in peace to have much practice on military mining or

demolition on the same scale as in war, yet sometimes one may get chances on large public works, which are of great value in this respect. Such an opportunity was granted in the construction of one of our great frontier railways, from Sibi in the plains of Beluchistan, to Peshin and Quetta, a distance of about 200 miles through wild rocky gorges, and with the possibility of treacherous landslips. Some 600 tons of gunpowder were used during the first working season, and many tons of dynamite. The railway lay for the first part in a river valley where rugged precipitous rocks overlooked banks of shingle and sand, and where the line had often to be taken along narrow ledges at the base of a precipice. To find room for the railway, it was often necessary to blast away the entire face of rocks, which rose sheer out of the river—a stream which in dry weather even was like a good Scotch salmon stream, but in rain was an immense torrent filling the whole bed, two or three hundred yards wide, between the rocks.

The largest of these mines consisted of a gallery some 30 feet in length, with two branches at the ends, the whole in the shape of the letter T. The size of the gallery was just wide enough for a man to crawl without much difficulty, and as the material was hard sandstone rock, it took some time to excavate. The loading was done entirely by an officer with his own hands, as in an important case of this kind every detail has to be scrupulously correct, and one cannot delegate the task to a subordinate. It was a task that took the whole day to perform —the day was a Sunday, on which the traffic on the temporary railway in the river-bed outside the entrance to the gallery was at a minimum. The powder was collected in small barrels, and carefully rolled in sacking up the narrow gallery and along the branches to a slightly enlarged chamber at each end. Light was obtained in the branches by a reflector, formed of a piece of polished tin, placed at the junction of main gallery and branches, and this was found quite sufficient for the purpose. One could not help wondering, as the task of piling-up half a ton of explosives at each end of the gallery proceeded, how long consciousness would remain in event of an accident happening. However, with proper precautions — such as indiarubber-soled shoes, and avoidance of iron tools, &c.— there was no fear of accidents, and the work was carried out easily. It would have been very different if, as happens daily now in Flanders, one heard the pick of the enemy coming nearer and nearer.

The explosion of this big mine ended in a rather ludicrous incident. On the opposite side of the valley, about 400 yards away, was the camp of the engineer-in-chief, whose wife had invited various guests to see the big blast in the evening. The actual lighting of the fuse was to be done by

a subordinate, who had orders to watch for the waving of a white handkerchief as a signal that all the guests had assembled, and on this he was to light the fuse and run. It so happened that one of the first sightseers to arrive had a flowing white *puggaree* round his hat, which he took off with a sweeping bow to his hostess on arrival. The watcher took this as the signal, lighted his fuse, and fled, much to the disgust of other guests who were coming later. However, there was ample time before the thrilling moment arrived. After a few minutes of anxious suspense, there was a muffled roar, and the whole hillside settled down in a mass of fragments.

Probably the largest charge that has been deliberately fired in war occurred in 1900 in the march of the Allied troops to Peking, at a place called Hoshi-wu. Here the Chinese had evidently intended to make a strong resistance, for they were in the act of digging a line of entrenchment, with obstacles of maize stalks in front, when they were attacked by the Indian cavalry and fled, leaving tools, and even food and drink behind them. In rear of the position the ground rose gradually to a wooded height on a bluff overlooking the Peiho river. In the wood there appeared a little village of the ordinary Chinese type, the largest building being a temple of no special size out of the ordinary.

The Allied troops had been marching since an early hour on a very hot day, and were settling down for their daily rest until resuming the march again in the cool of the evening, when a newspaper correspondent who accompanied the force, and who had the curiosity to examine the village, came into the bivouac to inquire whether the engineers wanted any gunpowder. He was referred to me as the commanding officer of the engineers of the Allied force of British, Americans, and Russians, and naturally I was interested to hear that the peaceful temple on the bluff had apparently been made into a temporary powder magazine. I went off at once to examine it, and found that it consisted of a small enclosure, with a central building of two large rooms, each of which was crammed from floor to ceiling with boxes of gunpowder, the whole weighing not less than 80 tons, and probably double that amount. Camp-followers were carelessly strolling in and out, and some were beginning, after the fashion of Indians, to cook their daily meal! To turn them out and place a guard over the place was the work of a few energetic minutes, and then orders were brought from the general commanding as to the disposal of this danger centre. His instructions were that it was to be blown up an hour after the troops evacuated the place that evening—the heat of the weather necessitating marching at night.

The hot hours of the day passed away in rest as far as concerned the bulk of the Allied

troops, but in work for the sappers, as a small fortified post had to be constructed for serving as a link on the line of communications. Work on this was going on steadily in the afternoon, when suddenly an alarm of fire was raised, and to the general consternation it was found that this had broken out in the little village close to the dangerous temple. All available workmen were hurried off there at once. Fortunately any wind there was blew in a direction away from the temple, but a fire has a habit of working up against the wind, and for some time the situation was serious. The natural heat of the day was great, the scorching of the flames was greater, and the exertions necessary to pull down houses and endeavour to get the fire isolated would have made one hot even on the coldest day in winter. But the heat of all combined was nothing to the excitement of knowing that if that fire were not extinguished there would be a disaster of the most appalling magnitude, and so everybody worked with the sweat pouring off their bodies and with an energy of desperation. The fire was subdued, but it had reached a point about twenty yards from the temple.

Evening came, and the troops marched off. There was ample time given to them to be far off from the effects of the big explosion, and that time was occupied quite fully in clearing away for a radius of about half a mile everybody that might be in the vicinity. I stayed behind with my adjutant, and another officer and a trusty sergeant who in former years had been a young corporal under me in Ireland. We sent our horses and mounted orderlies to a place about 800 yards off on the outskirts of the village. Then we finally went inside the enclosure, allowed sufficient time-fuze to burn eight minutes, and lighted. As I closed the gates of the enclosure, I saw two Russian soldiers quietly strolling along, unconscious of danger. I made them rush off with me, and they sat near us while we waited for events on a little grassy slope above the river, about 500 yards from the temple. Eight minutes passed, then ten, then eleven, and I was getting very uncomfortable, for a misfire on such occasions is often horribly dangerous.

But there was no misfire. A terrific roar and concussion knocked us all over like so many rabbits. It was an indescribable sensation, as though one had received a simultaneous blow all over one's body, and I am bound to say that for a brief fraction of a second I thought, *actum est de Balbo.* However, scrambling to one's feet, rather pleased to find no bones broken, one saw a dense cloud of black fumes threatening to engulf any spectators, and so we moved away. The Russians evidently thought this was too infernal for words, and they disappeared into the twilight with surprising celerity. The adjutant told me that once in Somaliland he

was pursued by a lion, and that he astonished himself, and possibly his pursuer, by his agility; but he is of opinion that the Russians' pace on this occasion was such as to put his performance entirely into the shade. Our orderlies and horses had also been knocked over, and it was some little time before they were all collected again.

Meantime we went back to the scene of the explosion. It is hardly necessary to say that not a vestige of the temple or the surrounding houses was left. In the place of them was a huge crater like some infernal cauldron with water bubbling up from the bottom, and all round was a deep layer of *débris*.

I heard afterwards that from the main body of the army, now about three miles off, the explosion resembled a huge black mushroom with streaks of flame in the immense black shaft.

It was a calm, peaceful night, with a full moon. We mounted our horses and rode after the main column, having many adventures before we caught them up, of a nature, however, which does not concern the present subject.

In Peking itself the enemy had done considerable injury. At the Pehtang, where Bishop Favier and his French priests had conducted a most heroic defence, the Chinese fired two mines, doing much damage, and killing, for the most part, innocent little children and kindly French nuns. In the Legation quarter, however, their efforts were less successful. They tried to undermine the British defences, but, to the surprise of the defenders, the noise underground seemed to come no closer, and we subsequently found that their underground work was lacking either in having no proper instruments or no scientific leader, for the mine lost direction completely and was being driven in a curious curve away from its objective. So there was no result.

The story of the mining operations of our armies in the present war has still to be told. It would be premature to tell anything of it yet, but it may at least be said that for heroism and thrilling adventure it eclipses anything that has ever been recorded in our own or any other army.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

THE TRADE UNIONS — WORDS FOR DEEDS — "PROFITEERS AND PSEUDO-PATRIOTS" — AN *IMPERIUM IN IMPERIO* — THE RULES OF LABOUR — A DISUNITED GOVERNMENT — THE MINISTERS' MANY VOICES — WANTED, A MANDATE! — THE DUTY OF NEUTRALS — A PREPOSTEROUS PROFESSOR.

THE Trade Union Congress has been wagging its head and its tongue at Bristol, and the quality which emerges most clearly from its deliberations is an exceeding folly. The members of the Trade Unions have long ago placed themselves beyond the reach of facts. Like all tyrants, they demand that they should hear only what is pleasant to their ears, and in their bitter hatred of truth they surrender themselves idly to the domination of words. They demand of their leaders not leadership, but talk. They pay to represent them those who have the easiest command of stock-phrases. If we may judge him by his manner of speaking, Mr Seddon, their President, has never done a day's manual work in his life. His hands, we are sure, are as clean from the stain of toil as the intriguing hand of the ineffable Mr Ramsay Macdonald himself. But Mr Seddon can make the sort of speech that the delegates like to listen to; he knows how to give them an exaggerated view of their importance; and if he is unable to tell them the truth, that is because a long course of flattery has made the truth unpalatable to them, as to him. Hymns of praise have been shouted in his ears (and theirs) by interested wire-pullers until he believes that all he says and does is sanctified from on high.

At Bristol he began by the expression of all the correct sentiments. He admitted that "these are times that try men's souls; solemn moments in the life of nations and individuals that demand clear judgment and the open mind that will examine in the full light of duty, and fearlessly follow the right." It sounds well, doesn't it? Unfortunately it lacks the essential sincerity. Mr Seddon proceeded to consider the situation, not in the full light of duty, but with an eye fixed firmly upon the advantages which might come to labour. He is quite sure that "Prussian militarism, with all its attested cruelty, rapine, and murder," must be destroyed, but it must be destroyed "in any form here at home." When we should think of fighting the Germans, he spends his wrath chiefly

"upon the profiteer and pseudo-patriot." Who these personages are we do not know, nor does he tell us. It is a proof of the deep-seated parochialism of him and his colleagues that even in this crisis they cannot rise above class-jealousy; they cannot remember for an instant the need and honour of England.

The profiteer and pseudo-patriot! The words have a good sound, haven't they? But they too are words and no more. As far as we know, they have not the remotest relation to sense or facts. Mr Seddon, unhappily, does not explain who are the "pseudo-patriots" of his rhetorical extravagance. Maybe they are the proprietors of certain journals, who seem to arouse all the wrath which Mr Seddon can spare from employers of labour. Why he should thus excite himself and his friends about an immaterial episode is not clear. What we have to discuss just now is not the conduct of Printing House Square, but the conduct of the War—the one and only thing that matters to anybody. We gather from another part of Mr Seddon's speech that he believes in "our inalienable right of free speech." Is this right, then, the peculiar privilege of labour? Shall not others be free also to express their opinions by whatever means are open to them? If Mr Seddon is not prepared to suspend this "inalienable right," he had better leave the conduct of newspapers out of the question. It is quite easy for him not to read the journals of which he disapproves, and he can take comfort in the reflection that the other side is not dumb. For our part, we prefer to agree with Mr Carmichael, who worthily represents the shop assistants, who has no fear of conscription, and of whose class 500,000 have joined the colours, that the Trade Unionists should think for themselves and leave the proprietors of newspapers to fight out their own battles.

Alas! they cannot think for themselves. The mere act of thought is interrupted in them by words, words, words. Here, for instance, is Mr Tom Shaw, of the Weavers, who is found declaring that "murder, fire, rapine, and the slaughter of innocent civilians make the blood boil through the veins like a stream of fire." That would be very much to Mr Shaw's credit, if only the blood didn't boil over quite so quickly. One would have thought that with streams of fire in his veins, Mr Shaw might have been stirred to sacrifice, that patriotism would have bubbled up in his seething frame. Not a bit of it. The boiling blood and the streams of fire are only words after all, and Mr Shaw has no other aim than to inform the world that he would "as soon trust a man like Bethmann-Hollweg as he would trust Damn-the-consequences Milner." We are quite sure Mr Shaw would.

This is not the temper in

which to approach the consideration of a grave peril. The time has gone by for the insincerities of rhetoric. But Labour lives in a land of its own devising. Even the "profiteer," that bogey of the Unions, is no nearer to reality than Mr Shaw's stream of fire. In truth, that particular bogey might well have been laid aside altogether. In times of peace it may be employed to frighten children without much danger. It should not be brought out and dressed up in time of war as though it represented a known and definite evil. Mr Seddon should have been very careful before he spoke that the words he used to denounce the imagined "profiteer" were something better than sound and fury. Here is what he says: "The share of labour in meeting the danger is seen in the increasing output of munitions and the willingness of skilled trades to do all possible. We invite the Minister of Munitions to be equally keen in carrying out his promise to deal with war profits."

The Minister of Munitions was not slow in accepting the challenge. He lost not a moment in repudiating Mr Seddon's sinister suggestion. His answer was clear and irrefutable. "I have already," said he, "under the Munitions Act placed 714 firms under control. That includes the bulk of the important towns in the Kingdom engaged wholly or mainly in manufacturing munitions of war. In every case the profits are limited to the terms of the Munitions Act, so that the benefit of any suspension of trade-union regulations shall accrue to the State and not to the employers. No profit-mongering is possible in these works. As your words, quite unintentionally I feel certain, might convey an impression that the Government had not carried out their part of the bargain with the trade unions to limit profits, I beg you to make this clear to the Congress, and to urge them to persuade the trade unions throughout the country to carry out their part in the bargain by suspending during the period of the war all regulations and practices which have the effect of restricting the output of material so urgently required for the protection of our gallant troops at the front and for the achievement of victory."

Such the dispute, which is well worth putting on record, since it illustrates more clearly than pages of argument the carelessness and frivolity of the Trade Unions. The most of their delegates are mere gramophones, grinding out aloud the sentiments of jealousy and suspicion. One thing at least must be clear to them, that they and those whom they represent have profited by the war. If the cost of living has gone up, their wages have risen at a yet faster rate. What they cannot bear is the mere suspicion, ungrounded as

it is, that others, not of their class, should profit also. Nor are they likely to derive any satisfaction from Mr M'Kenna's Budget. So easily credulous are they that they believe any falsehood that is told them if only it chimes with their humour. Mr Thomas admitted in the House that to the railway men National Service meant "cheap soldiers," and that if under a system of compulsion some of their number were selected for the Army they would think only that advantage was being taken to get rid of "prominent Union men." And yet it is these men, incapable as it would seem of clear thought or patient reflection, that the Government has placed above the law. They are to-day a nation within the nation, an *imperium in imperio*. They come forward with the airs and graces of a self-sacrificing ally. They declare their willingness, under certain conditions, to aid the British Army in its fight against Germany, as though their own homes, their own lives, were not as nearly at stake as the homes and lives of others. They have put their Union above the country, they pass resolutions against conscription, and threaten revolution if any steps are taken by the responsible Government to obtain recruits without their approval and assent. They declare that they object to compulsion, and forget that law (*i.e.*, compulsion) attends and protects them from the cradle to the grave. The mere registering of a child's birth dedicates it to law and compulsion. "Every member of a State," said Mr Ellis Griffith in the House of Commons, "knew he had to give up something as a member of the nation. He gave up liberty in order to obtain safety. That was the basis of citizenship." But the Trade Unionists are not content to be mere citizens. They must live under their own laws and to their own profit. They refuse to see that National Service is founded upon absolute justice. If they are unwilling to fight, why should they be defended by the wounds and deaths of others? They tell us vaguely what they would do in case of invasion, if they thought their hearths and homes in danger. Yet they are not convinced by occasional air-raids, nor by the bombardment of unfortified towns. How much invasion, we wonder, is necessary to persuade them to acknowledge the universal duty of bearing arms? And will they not understand that wherever the battle be fought, it is a war of defence in which we are engaged? The frontier of England lies to-day in France and Flanders, and British homes and hearths are protected wherever a trench is dug by British hands.

The gospel which the Trade Unionists put above the gospel of patriotism is surely the strangest gospel ever preached

by the tongue of man. The privilege to which they cling closer than to the right of service or the duty of defence, is the privilege of not doing their best. What a subject is here for satire! What a chance for another Gulliver to discover another Lilliput! England is in distress—it is idle to minimise the danger in which we all lie—and her greatest difficulty is to induce the Trade Unionists to permit zeal for the moment to dominate the workshop, and to cease measuring the production of their fellows not by the best but by the worst standard. And these Unionists, capable thus of bungling their own affairs, are the men to whom we have handed over the government of our country, and who, if strong measures be not taken and harsh words spoken, will destroy, for a whim, the foundations of our Empire.

Yet if they mistake words for deeds, if they bow to the cunning of voluble burgesses, it is not wholly their fault. They have separated themselves from the nation, to which they should belong, because their flatterers have told them that they engrossed the strength and wisdom of the country. Their wisdom, of course, for their flatterers lay in a promise to vote straight, their strength in their organisation. Mr Seddon is the spokesman of less than 3,000,000 men, and yet he fully believes that he can dictate terms to the country. Are we surprised at his pretension when we remember that he and his friends have been placed above the law? A class which is told that it can do no wrong instantly becomes selfish and arrogant. It eagerly catches up all the smooth words uttered in its praise and to its undoing. It loses in its claim to privilege all sense of right and duty. Still worse, it sacrifices to vanity any power which it might once have possessed of clear thought and logical argument. The Trade Unions are based upon the rigid principle of compulsion, and when compulsion is demanded for the safety of the country their delegates indignantly repudiate it. Mr Seddon and his friends are never tired of singing the praises of democracy, and yet proclaim in advance that in the matter of conscription they will not accept the decision of the country's representatives. In brief, they have forgotten the meaning of their own creed, and lulled to sleep by the enchantment of words, they dream that they are the sole representatives of truth and justice. So simple are they that when Mr Smillie (of the Miners) says that "the landowners and capitalists are in this cry for conscription because they are afraid that the country will be taken from their control and their land and wealth interfered with," they do not greet his rodomontade with laughter. They make themselves accomplices

in his folly by cheering his empty words. And if they succeeded in deranging the defences of the country they would doubtless boast them of their "power," forgetting that an idiot boy can wreck a train or fire a powder-magazine, and an idiot boy is neither wise nor strong.

We have, however, a deeper faith in the working men of England than in their leaders. We refuse to believe that, if national service were proclaimed necessary to our national safety, the working men of England would be guilty of the crime of obstruction, which Mr Thomas and others impute to them. After all, in a time of common danger, it is easy to accept a common discipline. To whatever class we belong, we are all fighting for the same cause; we shall win with victory the same reward. Surely the salvation of England is worth all the sacrifices which we can make for it. It is not for a rule of the workshops or for the prejudice of a Trade Union that we shall outrage the great traditions of our race and show ourselves disloyal to the history of a thousand years. That there should be any division in the present conflict is the more remarkable because we are all openly agreed about the justice of our cause and the plain necessity of a victorious issue. The handful of peacemongers who have been driven into the enemy's camp by disappointed vanity does not disturb our unanimity. They are recognised everywhere to be, what indeed they are, traitors to their fatherland. For the rest we have but one thought, one resolve. Not for a hundred years have we been able to boast this stern spirit of union in the presence of the foe. We fought Napoleon despite the opposition of the Whigs. We established freedom in South Africa and faced a compact and noisy army of pro-Boers at home. To-day we have but a single foe—the enemy; but a single end to achieve—victory, and it is a reckless folly to quarrel about the means. What these means are, or should be, it is not for us nor for the Trade Unions to decide. The Government must explain to the country precisely what it needs, and the country, we hope and believe, will follow whatever lead be given it eagerly and without criticism.

Meanwhile the Government shrinks in terror from the duty of leadership. So long has it pursued a miserable policy of conciliation, so long has it yielded to any group which was numerous enough to claim its notice, that it has lost, if indeed it ever possessed, the habit of command. The crisis through which we are passing has not turned our politicians into statesmen, and Mr Asquith is determined as ever to check with a piece of pædagogic insolence any attempt that is made to enlighten or

to arouse the country. Still a master of evasive replies and cunning innuendo, he appears to believe that the conduct of a great war demands the same set speeches and careful perorations, which wore in times of peace an air of jaded reality. We have been fighting Germany for fourteen months, and Mr Asquith has travelled no farther on the road of victory than that bypath which bears on its finger-post the disgraceful legend, "wait and see." How fine a phrase it seemed in the brave days, when Mr Asquith kept the three parts of his coalition moving like a juggler tossing glass balls about him in the air. It was sure of a laugh then, like an actor's familiar gag. How pitiful it seems to-day, when it is still the beginning and the end of every speech delivered by the Prime Minister! Though the words be unspoken, their echo still rings in our ears. The German line in France and Flanders is unbroken. "Wait and see!" We make little progress in the Dardanelles. "Wait and see!" The German advance in Russia is still unchecked. "Wait and see!" The words, once a jest, have become a shameful impertinence, and have set a mark of indelible disgrace upon Mr Asquith. We are at war with Germany, and the Prime Minister appears to think that he has done his duty if he keeps his unwieldy team of twenty-two together. .

Meanwhile, he deprecates criticism as fiercely as he did in the days when his inactivity did not matter. Above all, he is angry if soldiers, returned from the front, dare to interrupt the placidity of the House of Commons. In a speech, which will surely become historical, Mr Asquith loftily reproved those members who, having watched with their own eyes the progress of the campaign, have dared to enlighten their colleagues and the country. "Let them remember," said the first of our politicians, "that they sit here not as representing the Army." (It may be noted in passing that nobody had claimed any such representation.) "They sit here as representing the constituencies of the Kingdom. The Army as an army has no representation in this House, and it would be most unjust that because there happened to be in the Army gallant officers who are serving their country, who are also members of Parliament, they should claim to come here with any special mandate to represent opinion in the Army." Was ever such nonsense spoken gravely to a country at war? Cannot you hear with what unction Mr Asquith rolled "mandate," his favourite word, round his tongue? But who shall imagine the state of mind of a man who asks a colleague what mandate he has for speaking the truth when his country is in danger? Should the member, who has fought in the trenches, demand the

views of his constituents before he presumed to warn his countrymen of the peril which lies ahead of them? None, save a politician, would care whether the mandate were there or not. We wish to know something of the truth, as much as will guide the country and not betray military secrets to the enemy, and Mr Asquith talks of mandates! If such freedom were allowed, says he in a priceless passage, "it might be a fatal thing for the Army; it would be a very bad thing for the House of Commons." Whether it would be bad or good for the House of Commons is a matter of indifference to all. But fatal for the Army? We are no longer demoralising our forces in the Curragh, Mr Asquith; our fleet is not still ordered to Lamlash Bay; and the country would far rather listen to the plain honest words of a soldier than to the meaningless rhetoric of a politician.

And then Mr Asquith, having used such language as this, asks us to trust the Government. But what shall we trust, whom shall we trust, why shall we trust them? Were it possible, we should be only too willing to trust the Government. The Government has given us no encouragement. We have no guarantee that the men, who for purposes of their own concealed Germany's warlike preparations from the people, are capable of prosecuting the war with vigour. We know that after the long lull of the winter months, when leisure was given us to make all the shells that were necessary for the campaign of spring, we waited and have seen. Are we justified still in giving a blank cheque to those who have not fulfilled their duty? But we are told, if there be disunion in the country, it will rejoice the heart of Berlin. We cannot afford to think just now about the heart of Berlin. It is the heart of England which should engross us. We know perfectly well that Berlin has the power, as she has the inclination, to invent whatever lies seem to suit the palate of her inhabitants. Nothing that we can say in criticism of ourselves is likely to bring much encouragement to the Prussians. Even if we abstained from criticism, German ingenuity might still impute it to us, and we can imagine nothing really more dangerous to our cause than a belief entertained by our enemies that Mr Harcourt's late exercises in optimism were taken seriously by Englishmen. That the Government is all the better for the criticism, which it deprecates, has been amply shown in the last few months. Had the flagging energy of our Ministers received no stimulus, cotton would still be free to enter Germany; the aliens, who in the past have lent valuable aid to our foe, would still be at large; German reservists would still be finding their way homewards to fight against us. Until, therefore, we have a small

Government—twenty-two is a number, in Cabinets as in cricket teams, which obviously suggests incompetence — inspired with one sole desire to carry on the war with energy, caring not a jot about the polling-booth, resolute only to find out the best way of success and to follow it ruthlessly, it will be everybody's duty to consider the progress of the war and to make such criticisms upon our governors as seem just and apposite.

Then again, we are told that a union of thought and heart is above all necessary for salvation. "One thing," says Mr Asquith, "I would deprecate and ban is the sinister spectre of domestic strife." But how can there be union in the country if there is disunion in the Cabinet? We believe that, in spite of Trade Unions, in spite of Mr Thomas and his men, the country would unite to throw its all into the common scale if only the Ministers would trust it. Yet our Ministers speak not with one but with a dozen voices. They are agreed neither in fact nor policy. He who would try to extract from their speeches a logical, consistent account of what has happened in the West and in the East, would find himself standing upon his head in sheer perplexity. They interpret events each according to his temperament. At one end of the string comes the amazing Mr Harcourt, who finds "the daily and weekly recruitment satisfactory and wonderful." In this he cannot persuade Lord Kitchener to agree with him. The Minister for War —and he ought to know— deplores the falling-off of recruits. "It was not safe to prophesy in war," again it is Mr Harcourt who speaks, "but it would be a surprise to the most accurate observers if it did not turn out to be true that by the end of next month the German effort had reached its maximum, and that a decline in the effort and efficiency of our enemies followed." With how many of his colleagues Mr Harcourt was in agreement when he spoke these words we know not. It is significant that he closed the speech of which they form part with the admirable platitude that "the present unity of the people is the highest interest of the nation." If only he had himself set an example of "union," we should be more easily persuaded to believe in his sincerity.

At the other end of the string is Mr Lloyd George, who in speech at any rate is bent upon dissociating himself sharply from his colleagues. With a passing fear of his own candour he is determined not to make the best of a bad job. He has come nearer to telling what looks like the truth than any one of his friends. In the much-quoted preface to his speeches, he paints in vivid colours the success of the Germans; he

admits that the Russian armies must be re-equipped before they are able to resume their place in the battlefield; he declares that "nothing but our best and utmost will pull us through," and asks with a passionate fervour, "Are we now straining every nerve to make up for lost time? Are we getting all the men we shall want to put in the fighting line next year to enable us even to hold our own?"

Upon the answer to this question depends the future of the British Empire, and Mr Lloyd George's hope of victory is very properly conditional. "If," says he, "we are not allowed to equip our factories and workshops with adequate labour to supply our armies, because we must not transgress regulations applicable to normal conditions; if practices are maintained which restrict the output of essential war material; if the nation hesitates, when the need is clear, to take the necessary steps to call forth its manhood to defend honour and existence; if vital decisions are postponed until too late; if we neglect to make ready for all probable eventualities; if, in fact, we give ground for the accusation that we are slouching into disaster as if we were walking along the ordinary paths of peace without an enemy in sight—then I can see no hope; but if we sacrifice all we own and all we like for our native land; if our preparations are characterised by grip, resolution, and a prompt readiness in every sphere, then victory is assured."

Nothing can be clearer than this statement of Mr Lloyd George's. As he says himself, he has been driven by the jeopardy of his native land to sound the note of alarm, and none who has followed the course of the war with care, and has no interest in saying the soft thing in exchange for a vote, will think that Mr George has overstated by a syllable the gravity of our case. That we shall win we hope and believe. We shall not win if we are content with the old policy of waiting to see what will turn up, if our workshops neglect their duty for an hour, if we do not follow Mr Lloyd George's lead, still, we fear, somewhat cryptic, and adopt at once the policy of universal and compulsory service.

Unhappily, according to the habit of the present Cabinet, Mr George speaks for himself alone. Mr Harcourt, as we have said, is in patent disagreement with him. As we should expect, Mr Asquith enjoys the safety of a middle place. He has never been for quick measures nor hot counsels. No man was ever so happy drifting down the stream of chance as he. But the stream of chance, pleasant enough for the peaceful, leads to shipwreck in time of war, and Mr Asquith must either make up his mind or yield his place to one who will. Unhappily it is the first am-

bition of the politician never to speak out, to leave always a way of escape behind him. To-day we demand and must have a statesman who will not fear to commit himself to a definite course of action, and to commit the country with him. We are tired of Newcastles, vain men who trickle to destruction as they please. It is time we had at least the semblance of a Pitt.

Mr Asquith's speech, made at the reassembling of Parliament, has been called epoch-making. If it make any epoch at all, it will make an epoch in words, not in action. It is not thus, in facing both ways, that victory will ever be attained. The Prime Minister found in the situation what we should expect him to find—cause for both satisfaction and regret. He did not echo by a single phrase Mr Lloyd George's grave warnings. He told us what indeed we all knew, that the issue before us is a worthy issue. He declared, and we agree with him, that "we shall continue to stake upon it everything we have — our wealth, our industry, our intelligence, the lives of our children, and the existence of our Empire." What he withheld from us is how and where we are to set our stake. Not one word of guidance did he give, not one suggestion of general or individual activity. It is true that he deprecated the sinister spectre of domestic strife. But that deprecation is not enough. It is not a negative, but a positive policy that we have a right to look for. Mr Asquith tells us what not to do. His pædagogic mind makes that task easy. Let him for once act the statesman, and tell us what to do. He will find a ready response and a universal obedience. The nation may be divided in detail; it is agreed in this, that Mr Micawber is a criminal in the crisis of war.

So by all means let us have union; but the union to be effective must begin at the top. No Minister can ask an uninstructed people to follow a counsel of perfection which is beyond the reach of himself and his colleagues. However, although the Government persists in giving us the stone of garrulity for the bread of counsel, there are certain things which have not escaped the notice of the people. Above all, we are resolved that the cunning of no neutral shall interfere with our settlement or deprive us of our just wrath. That attempts will be made to smooth over our resentment, and to save Germany from the due punishment of her crimes, is evident. Here, for instance, is a Swedish professor, Erik Björkman by name, who is worthy to stand by the side of Haeckel and the rest. He has been confiding his views to a journal called 'Upsala,' and in spite of himself has given us a clear warning of his evil intent. So we know in time how deeply we must distrust Professor Erik

Björkman and his works,—it is strange what a sinister part the professors of all nations, including our own, have played in the war,—even though he approach us with smooth words upon his tongue. Now, this Professor thinks it is the duty of neutrals to heal the wounds of the war and to restore to the combatants the blessing of charity. For this delicate task he thinks that no country is so well fitted as Sweden, whose most precious possession he declares to be an absence of national hatred, for which it has to thank partly its long peace, partly its upbringing. Norway, he believes, now that the trouble of the Union is over and done with, might do something. But he thinks very little of America's power to mediate. The great Republic is hindered from appreciating the points of view of both sides by the use of our English speech. Upon Sweden, therefore, has descended the great duty of reconciliation, and this is how the egregious Professor Björkman discharges what he deems is his part in it.

He sets forth with great pomp the "lies and scurrilities" which, says he, the newspapers of France and England have hurled at the head of the Emperor and his soldiers. He gives instances of what he calls "detraction," but what is no more than the plain and certified truth, from the 'Journal des Debats' and the 'Matin.' He belabours the English press for not looking with an equal eye of aversion upon Russia's "cruelties" in Galicia and East Prussia and upon Germany's "proceedings" in Belgium. The English press is perfectly right to make a distinction between wanton outrage and military operations; but we cannot sufficiently thank Professor Björkman for revealing his precious "neutrality," when he calls the butchery of Louvain a "proceeding," and reserves the word "cruelty" for Russia's advance in East Prussia. And then having denounced William Watson for calling the Kaiser "Hell's bridegroom," he thus unburdens his "neutral" soul: "Examples of lies and invective unhappily could fill volumes. Unfortunately mine are culled exclusively from the press of the Entente. The reason is that I have vainly sought for any corresponding insults in the German press." Did you ever read of such resolute and interested humbug as this? Professor Björkman, poor man, has done his best to extract from the German press some expressions of anger, disdain, and falsehood! And he has found none. His ill-luck surely is equal to his hypocrisy. Were he sincere in his wish for specimens of Teutonic rage and Teutonic lying we could supply him with thousands. But they would be of no service to him. He is plainly violent in his neutrality, and like many

another neutral is savagely determined to look only upon that one side which suits his peculiar brand of charity.

And having thus openly declared his partiality, our Swedish professor proceeds to bleat that the best thing that neutrals could do would be to bring the adversaries humanly nearer to one another. He owns that the prospect of success is small. It will be small, indeed, if the superfluous work of reconciliation be attempted by such fierce partisans of the Kaiser as he proves himself to be. No, no, Professor Björkman, we for our part have no wish to be brought nearer, humanly or otherwise, to baby-killers; but you, in any case, are obviously unfit to advocate the cessation of national hatred until you have given to the study of the German press something of that sympathetic attention which your "neutrality" complacently yields to a manifest perversion of the press of the Allied nations.

Printed by William Blackwood and Sons.

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCI. NOVEMBER 1915. Vol. CXCVIII.

THE WARDS IN WAR-TIME.

BY A RED CROSS PRO.

I. AB INITIO.

The Great War has brought many changes in our midst. It has filled our streets with uniforms until the dullest of suburbs resembles a garrison town; it has made serious inroads on the pleasures of the nation by converting race-courses into prison-camps or regimental training-grounds, and it has also seen the growth of new hospitals, which are no longer the bleak halls of desolation so familiar in civil times, but bright and home-like in character.

It is the patients themselves who have worked this transformation by their cheery optimism and brave outlook on life. The pain, suffering, and tragedy inseparable from hospital life are still present, but the light-hearted spirits of the patients thrust them into the background. Men who have lost a limb, men who are shattered for life, accept their fate with the most wonderful courage, delighting in small jokes at one another's expense, grumbling loudly over trifles and facing real misfortunes without a murmur. These are the men who have done so much for their country in the field, and who continue to do the same in the hospitals, ever ready to do all in their power for a fellow-patient, and to give any help they can to the Sisters and Nurses in their work. The brightness of the military hospitals to-day is a tribute to the patients themselves.

Schools, training colleges, and municipal buildings have been turned into hospitals as the need for more accommodation arose. At Blacktown the new hospital, when completed,

proved to be a triumph of adaptation out of most unpromising material. Man had designed it for a workhouse. Necessity had decreed it must be a hospital, and a wonderful compromise resulted. The ruthless hand of the reformer seized upon the dwellings of the poor. Wooden partitions were swept away, walls pierced with arches, doors inserted, and windows made to open. For the inmates, with that instinctive distaste for fresh air which prevails amongst the poor, had approached the kind-hearted Master of the Workhouse with a request to have the crevices of the windows filled with putty. "The draughts do be terrible," they said, and in a weak moment he gave his consent, little dreaming that six months later the leading lights of the medical profession in Blacktown would stand aghast at this glaring instance of unhygienic conditions in a public institution in the twentieth century. Traces of the workhouse still survived, however, in the numerous entrances and exits and in the many winding staircases, up and down which flurried lieutenants were to chase elusive colonels in the days to come.

The staff of the military hospital at Blacktown was another proof of our national genius for adapting ourselves to circumstances. A short year ago ninety per cent of the doctors, nurses, and orderlies were civilians, who little thought that they would one day wear the panoply of war and form part of the great military machine. The doctors were either eminent local practitioners, who wore their khaki suits and leather belts with ill-disguised discomfort, or fledglings from medical schools, who gloried in the authority in which they were newly vested and laid great stress on military forms and ceremonies. Never for a moment did they forget that they had left civilian days far behind, and they exacted the deference due to their superior rank in peremptory terms from the patients.

The Staff Nurses mostly belonged to the Territorial Reserve, and could be divided roughly into "Dug Outs" who were enjoying well-earned "rest after toil" until the country's need called them out of retirement, or youngsters who had just finished four years' training in the one perfect hospital, and who promptly condemned everything in Blacktown which differed from it. There were also Red Cross probationers, or "the pros.," as the Staff Nurses usually called them, working in Blacktown. This was an anomaly, as hitherto only fully-trained nurses had been allowed to work in military hospitals, but the great scarcity of orderlies made their presence needed. Their duties were to help the Staff Nurses and make themselves as useful as possible, but, like most innovations, they were not looked upon with much favour by the profession, and were generally regarded in the light of a necessary evil.

"I hated the idea of having Red Cross pros., but I admit we could not have done without them," said one of the Staff Nurses at Blacktown, and this was the usual attitude towards them. Yet so long as they remembered to be very subservient, to hide any knowledge they possessed, and to behold themselves as of less than no account, life passed fairly well.

The orderlies were also civilians, who had donned the guise of war, and in happier days were hewers of coal in the Welsh coal-pits or on the Tyneside. They had been rejected as medically unfit for active service, and many were making a real sacrifice in giving up an income of £4 or £5 a week to receive 1s. 10d. a day, and be at the beck and call of an uncertain-tempered Staff Nurse, with an obdurate Sergeant-major in the background. Long hours, much scrubbing and carrying of meals, and menial work, and plentiful blame for what they had not done, combined to make their sacrifice a very real one.

Last of all came the patients, and these, like the staff of the hospital, had been civilians little more than a year ago. After twelve months of war the proportion of regulars is woefully small; and when any discussion on army etiquette was started, it was only after prolonged search that a regular could be discovered who would act as referee.

"Have you ever seen our night orderly try to salute the Colonel?" said Jackson one day. "It is too funny; the fellow has not the faintest idea how to do it."

"It's no for want of practice if he does not do it properly. The fellow salutes every second person he meets," said M'Vean.

"It does not matter how badly officers salute, but if you are a private you are hauled over the coals in no time in my regiment," said Jones regretfully.

"But an officer's salute is not the same as a private's."

"Of course it is," said Jackson loftily. "It is only that officers don't do it properly."

"Rubbish!" said M'Vean. "There is one salute for an officer and one for a private. It is not the same. It's like this."

But even his demonstration failed to convince his critics. Jackson, who had been a solicitor's clerk before he joined the New Army, had his critical faculties well developed, and he looked round the ward to see whose opinion would carry weight. O'Ryan, the excitable Irishman, had been a Fleet Street journalist, and knew little of the technical side of his new profession; while Johnson, Viney, and Pewsey, the three A.S.C. men—or Ally Sloper's Cavalry, as they were generally called—were equally ignorant. The puny Jones had handled bales of linen behind the counter, and paid assiduous attention to the wants of lady customers, before enlisting in a London Territorial battalion and meet-

ing the great adventure of his life in the fields of France, but his military knowledge could be accounted nil.

Jackson was perfectly certain that M'Vean was wrong in his contention, but nevertheless he would maintain it with the same pertinacity which had finally got him into the Army. For M'Vean's career had shown the value of pertinacity. A year ago he was working as an engineer on the Clyde, and on the outbreak of war offered himself for the Navy, but was rejected owing to bad teeth. Undaunted, he had the offending members removed and then attempted to enlist in the Royal Engineers, but was promptly refused on the ground that the teeth he possessed were not natural but acquired. Fortunately he decided to make a third attempt — this time in a Seaforth battalion —and was accepted, and in due time went out to France.

"I know you are wrong," said Jackson. "Kilbride, could you settle it for us?"

Kilbride was a fellow-countryman of M'Vean's, and had been a schoolmaster before volunteering for foreign service in a Territorial battalion on the outbreak of war. He was highly esteemed in Ward B., especially as an authority on spelling, and proved to be a convenient form of dictionary which was both reliable and saved the trouble of turning the pages.

Kilbride looked up from his book.

"I don't think it matters how the officer salutes," he said, "so long as he shows that he is acknowledging the private's salute; but you had better ask Akerman—he is a regular."

Akerman was a stalwart 9th Lancer, and enjoyed the unique distinction of being the only regular in Ward B. He had not seen active service, for a benevolent Government had discovered, much to his disgust, that he was more useful training officers in England than charging Germans with the point of his lance.

"What do you say, Akerman?" shouted Jackson, and proceeded to enter into the matter in dispute in detail, for Akerman's deafness made it very difficult to be certain whether he was answering your question or an imaginary one that he thought you had asked.

"Now you do understand, don't you? Is an officer's salute the same as a private's?"

But Akerman's answer was never given, for at that moment orderly appeared with the tea-pail, and the clock struck half-past four. The close-time for gramophones was ended.

"Do be quiet, you fellows. What does it matter? Now we can fetch the records before those chaps in C get them," said Lamb, with a sigh of anticipation.

II. A DAY IN THE WARDS.

Life in the wards begins at 6 A.M., when all patients that are not confined to bed are exhorted to rise by a harassed orderly. They then proceed to make their beds according to hospital standards, which permit neither wrinkles nor creases, nor loose ends on the fair white surface. At 7.30 orderly arrives with the porridge—that fruitful source of wit—in a large tin pail.

"There are abscesses in the porridge this morning, Sister."

"Kilbride, how can you be so disgusting? That is no way to talk at meals," said Staff Nurse M'Tavish disapprovingly.

"Well, if they are not abscesses they are tumours," maintained Kilbride.

"And the stuff in our mugs is not tea at all. It is brown water."

"I have not seen a tea-leaf since I have been in hospital," lamented Jackson.

"Because the tea is made in a boiler in the cookhouse, stupid, and the tea-leaves stay behind. Can't you taste the furred inside of the boiler every time you drink?" exclaimed Lamb.

"Well, I'd rather see a tea-leaf, and then I'd have an idea what it was I was drinking," persisted Jackson.

With the arrival of the eggs interest brightens considerably, for the great-hearted British public delights in collecting eggs for its wounded heroes and despatching them to the hospitals. Often there is a name and address written on the egg, accompanied by a good wish: "From Betty Barnes, Todmorden — hoping you will soon be well." And sometimes there is a text or a prayer. Occasionally there have been verses on the eggs—

> "I send this little offering,
> And hope you'll soon be well,
> And may it ease your suffering
> I write these lines to tell."

Akerman was so delighted with this, that he kept the egg for quite a long time in his locker and copied the verse into all the Sisters' albums which came his way, regardless of the fact that the owners of the albums were enjoying perfect health at the moment.

Jones also had an adventure with one of these literary eggs, but it had a less satisfactory ending. One morning, when he had been about ten days in hospital, he was given an egg on which was written in large clear writing, "From Aggie Watson, Rosebriar Cottage, Little Saltcombe. Dear wounded hero, may you soon be well." So Jones, being a practical youth, wrote the name and address on a piece of paper before setting to work to demolish the egg, and spent a laborious morning composing a letter to the fair Aggie. In due course a letter, bearing the Little Saltcombe postmark, arrived for the delighted Jones, but his joy soon faded when he found, on opening the

letter, that it was written by the schoolmistress, as Aggie Watson herself was only six years old. Not even the warmest thanks, and the knowledge that "Aggie will always keep the letter of one who has served his King and Country in the trenches as one of her greatest treasures," could compensate for this disillusionment.

After breakfast comes washing up, which is done by the patients, on behalf of the ward-maid, in a shallow sink. A good deal of water escapes on to the floor in the process, to the intense annoyance of the ward-maid, who has been heard to wonder audibly, "If patients' washing up is not more trouble than it is worth"; but it is only fair to add, she has never shown the least desire to perform the duty herself. Whether it is done willingly or unwillingly varies a good deal in different wards, but Ward B. always rose to the occasion like a man. They shared a small kitchen with Ward C., and used to wash up on alternative days, and the system worked well until the coming of Pettinger.

"I am not going to wash up for those lazy chaps over in B.," he remarked. "Let them wash their dishes and we will wash ours."

"But they washed ours yesterday," a fellow-patient reminded him.

"Well, they can wash their own to-day. I would not set my foot inside their ward."

So forthwith time-tables had to be drawn up, to make sure that every patient was performing his fair share, and washing up became the most terrible burden, as it involved the careful counting of every knife, fork, spoon, mug, bowl, plate, and egg-cup, in case one belonging to the other ward were inadvertently washed.

"Though you may be very sure that a fellow who takes the trouble to count everything he washes would take good care not to wash one too many," said M'Vean. "He would not run any risks."

Once for a whole day a violent feud raged between the two wards over an unwashed mug found in the debatable ground of the sink, when Ward C. arrived with their breakfast things. Pettinger was certain it had come out of Ward B., and M'Vean was equally positive that "one of those lazy beggars in C. had been drinking milk in the night. Why, they are just like so many cats lapping up milk all day long, and over in B. we never see a drop." Neither side would claim it as their property, and it was not until a harassed orderly from Ward D. arrived in search of a missing mug that even partial harmony was restored.

Fortunately, with the departure of Pettinger this division of labour was allowed to fall into abeyance, and very soon each ward in turn washed up their own things and the others as in the good old days.

While washing up is going on in the kitchen, the ward becomes a hive of industry, and every patient who is not

in bed sets to work to get the ward in order. One scrubs the tops of the lockers, another polishes the tiled tops of the tables, and a third cleans the brasses; while Akerman and Jackson, each armed with a broom, proceed to sweep the ward with long rhythmic strokes taken in concert, to the delight of their fellow-patients in bed. In theory the ward is swept by orderly at 6 A.M., and by the ward-maid two hours later; but her scrubbing duties being weighty, the patients are delighted to do it for her, while the amount of dust which can collect between the hours of 6 A.M. and 8 A.M. is one of those strange phenomena connected with hospitals.

When the tables are ready, the floral decoration of the ward is begun. This may be simple or complex, according to the number and variety of the offerings sent in. On visiting days strange and wonderful assortments of tight bundles in garish colours are received, and have to be dealt with carefully with an unobtrusive pail ready at hand beneath the table, where they are deposited to avoid hurting the susceptibilities of the patients. Luckily patients are not very observant, and rarely miss any particular flowers. On the other hand, enormous brown cardboard boxes of flowers are sent in by the kind-hearted in the town, and frequently arrive in a moribund condition; but these can be despatched quickly into the pail, for there are no feelings to consider, and it only remains to sigh for what might have been.

"I reckon flowers are a nuisance," said M'Vean wearily one day, after several fruitless efforts to please the Staff Nurse's artistic eye.

"But, M'Vean, you would not like the ward without flowers. Think how bare it would be."

"I should not mind."

"But think of the poor men in bed. Don't you know that

> 'Flowers to the spirits in prison are all
> they can know of the spring.
> They freshen and sweeten the wards
> like the waft of an angel's wing,'"

she quoted softly.

"They are a nuisance," M'Vean persisted, quite unmoved by the appeal to his higher nature. "You are always having to shift them every time there is a meal. They are all right growing, but here they are dead, and I never see any pleasure in watching things decay."

"What barbarians some of the men are," said the Staff Nurse to a colleague later. "They seem to have no appreciation for the beauties of nature"; and M'Vean, had he heard her, would have smiled.

When the ward is in order, dressings are begun, and about 11 o'clock the doctor may be expected. During his visit the patients stand at their cots in their wonderful hospital suits, which some patriot devised in the early days of the war. These symbolise our national colours—brilliant blue coat and trousers, bright-red tie and white shirt—and are

so noteworthy that no patient could hope to obtain a surreptitious drink, when out of bounds, without being identified.

Doctors vary very much in their manner with the patients, and Lieutenant Burn, who was young, did not believe in showing any undue sympathy. Gazing into the far distance over the head of the patient, he would inquire, "Going on all right?" and pass on to the next one.

"What is the matter with you?" he asked Johnson, a day or two after he had been admitted.

"Fractured ankle, sir."

"How did you do it?"

"I trod on a piece of bread."

"A piece of what?"

"Bread, sir."

"You mean a crust."

"No, sir; bread. We were drawing rations in camp at 6.30 in the morning, and I stepped back suddenly and fell to the ground."

"This man," said Lieutenant Burn in an incisive voice, turning to the Head Sister, "says he fractured his ankle by treading on a piece of bread."

"But," asked the Head Sister in a shocked voice, "what was bread doing strewn on the ground? It must have been a very wasteful camp."

"Let me look at your ankle;" and when the back splint and voluminous swathings were removed and the ankle exposed to view, Lieutenant Burn exclaimed, "This ankle is no more fractured than the other one. We'll have him walking about in no time," and poor Johnson remained a fallen prophet in the ward from that time forth.

Pewsey, the next patient, had an irresistible aversion to staying in bed, and rising stealthily in the middle of the night to perambulate the ward, had succeeded in bursting open a deep-seated wound in his back from which the stitches had just been removed.

"It will have to be sewn up again," said Lieutenant Burn gloomily; "it has all broken open."

"I won't go back to the tailor's shop," said Pewsey bitterly. "It nearly killed me last time. I had no sleep for six nights after it."

"If I say you are to go to the operating theatre, you will go," remarked Lieutenant Burn. "While you are under my care I have to do the best I can for you."

"I don't care," said Pewsey; "I will stay in bed until I am carried out in a coffin before I'll go back to the tailor's shop."

Lieutenant Burn ignored this contumely, and passed on to Viney, who instantly assumed the shark-like look he reserved for doctors. "How are you to-day?"

"Not so well, sir; rather a pain in my back," and he stood with legs apart and hands placed lugubriously on the lower regions of his spine. This was a sudden malady, for half an hour before Viney had

been bending over a game of bowls as eagerly as any one.

"A little gentle massage, I think. And how is your throat?"

"I think I could eat a little chicken," said Viney, with a sidelong look at Lieutenant Burn.

"And he has gone and got himself put on chicken, when he has only been in the army a fortnight, and I've spent weeks in the trenches and no one has ever put me on chicken," said the infantile Jones pathetically.

"And you?" said Lieutenant Burn to Roper, a sturdy Berkshire giant, who was constantly complaining that his eyes gave him trouble.

"Me eyes be bad to-day," he said. "Sometimes I sees double, and sometimes I sees nothing at all."

"How do you see double? Is it this way or that?" asked Lieutenant Burn, placing his hands first vertically and then horizontally.

"I can't rightly say," mumbled Roper. "Sometimes it is one way and sometimes the other."

"A most curious case," said Lieutenant Burn in a sceptical voice as he entered the next ward.

"I notice you read the paper every evening, Roper," said Kilbride as soon as the doctor and nurses had vanished through the door. "I suppose as you see double you must see two newspapers, but I notice you always manage to take hold of the right one."

After the doctor's visit the patients are at liberty to wander about the grounds as they please until one o'clock, which is the dinner hour. Staff Nurse M'Tavish served the dinners in the ward kitchen, with the aid of the orderly and probationer.

"Run and get the soup-ladle, Nurse," she said, on arriving on the scene of action. "And, Orderly, remember in future I want mugs for the soup and bowls for the pudding."

So Orderly had to hasten in search of twenty-three mugs and pile them in the best order possible on the kitchen table. Unfortunately only twenty were forthcoming, and it was only after exhaustive search that the missing three were discovered on the bathroom shelf, where a careful patient had placed them to dry, after branding them in black enamel with large capital B.'s — the hall-mark of the ward—earlier in the morning.

At this juncture the worried orderly discovered that Ward B. had omitted the formality of laying the table. All the able-bodied patients had forgotten the flight of time in the grounds, and the bed patients, like true philosophers, had resigned themselves to the inevitable. Akerman and Jackson dashed backwards and forwards to collect the necessary plates and cutlery, and just as Staff Nurse M'Tavish grasped the limp white steak, which constituted Jones's fish dinner, she discovered that there were no plates.

"Nurse, where are the plates?" she cried in excusable

anger, for the limp body was bending to breaking-point. The plates involved considerable delay, for no dry heat being available, some ingenious spirit devised the brilliant, if wasteful, plan of warming them with running water from the hot-water tap during the three-quarters of an hour the ward-maid was away for her dinner. Each plate had thus to be dried separately, and when at last they were ready, Nurse M'Tavish's anger had considerably increased.

"Who has been spilling water?" she cried, looking in at the door of Ward B.

For the patients in their frantic efforts to repair their previous neglect had overturned two vases of flowers.

"Are you children that you cannot move a table without upsetting the flowers?"

The special diets of fish and chicken being distributed first, it remained for patients bearing the cryptic sign "Ord. D. H." on their charts to be served. This being interpreted reads, "Ordinary Dining Hall," and consists of an excellent meal of meat, two vegetables, and pudding, all on a liberal scale. Indeed patients who grumble at their fare in these hospitals must be very difficult to please, for it is both bountiful and excellent.

While dinner is in progress the orderly officer, heralded by a sergeant, makes his round. This is never a very popular duty amongst the young doctors, partly because it entails a great deal of running up and down stairs, when it would be pleasanter to sit quietly down to one's own dinner, and partly because it is very difficult not to appear ridiculous when certain incidents occur.

Lieutenant Burn, who was a great stickler for etiquette, had just rebuked Akerman, whose deafness prevented him from hearing footsteps, for failing to stand at attention at his approach, when one of those unpleasant little incidents which fall to the lot of orderly officers occurred.

"Orderly Officer, any complaints?" said the Sergeant as they entered Ward C.

"Yes, sir," said Pettinger, drawing forth an egg which he had concealed in his soap-dish since breakfast time. "Smell this egg, sir," and he proceeded to thrust the offensive object under the lieutenant's nose.

"Really," said Lieutenant Burn to his wife later in the day, "the men are sometimes positively childish in the way they behave. To-day when I was doing my round as orderly officer, one fellow thrust a disgusting egg right under my nose, and another stood up and complained that he had had to drink his tea at breakfast out of a jam jar as there were not sufficient mugs. I call it puerile."

The afternoons in hospital are given up to amusement. All patients who have the doctor's permission go for motor rides once or twice a week, and these joy-rides are so popular that a register has to be kept and the names taken in strict rotation to make sure that all

have the same chance. Very often the drive includes a tea-party at which the wounded are received with great honour, and the least shy are induced by their host and hostess to narrate their experiences "out there." O'Ryan always shone at these entertainments, as his Celtic imagination enabled him to paint the horrors of war in vivid colours, and fully compensated for the trifling drawback that he had not yet left his native shores. The dreariness of life in the trenches, the long nights, the percussion of the great shells which shook the ground, were made grim realities by the shameless O'Ryan, and kind-hearted ladies would wander about the hospital inquiring for "that poor young Irishman who had such terrible experiences out there." Meanwhile his fellow-guests would sit silent but closely observant, never missing a detail, so that on their return they could describe to the Ward "how many lies old O'Ryan told to-day." After tea gramophones are permitted by the authorities, and the wards are filled with the mingled strains of Caruso, "Why do they call me Archibald?" and "Land of Hope and Glory,"—all three equally beloved by the patients. Once Ward B. enjoyed a crowded hour of glorious life, when it had the good fortune to secure two gramophones on the same evening, and worked them both without intermission—one usually a few bars ahead of the other—tandem fashion, as it were, until the Staff Nurse's nerves gave way under the strain, and she ordered the removal of the lesser instrument.

So the patients had to content themselves with one gramophone, worked with unabated zest and incalculably short breathing-spaces, as they used to do before the chance of a lifetime came. At seven o'clock supper arrives in the form of cocoa and bread-and-butter, but the devotees of the gramophone pay little heed to the interruption.

"Those lazy beggars in C. are sure to have the gramophone to-morrow," said Lamb, "so do let us make the most of it."

"We could have every record three times over if we were quick," added Pewsey. "Do put on 'Land of Hope and Glory.'"

"And don't throw the needles about on the bread-and-butter plate," exclaimed M'Vean. "I nearly swallowed one just now."

"No, you can't have it to-night," cried the Ward with one voice, as the form of Pettinger appeared in the doorway. "It is our turn, and we shall not have finished before eight o'clock."

For a statutory bye-law of the hospital forbids the playing of gramophones after 8 P.M. At that hour they are deposited—out of reach of temptation—in the Sister's Duty Room for the night. At 9 P.M. comes lights out, and the day in the wards is over.

III. THE ROYAL VISIT.

Lieutenant Burn entered the ward one morning with his usual aloof air, and gazing over the heads of the patients into the far distance, remarked casually—

"The King and Queen are coming this afternoon."

This electric spark generated a powerful current, and in a moment the ward became the scene of unprecedented activity. M'Vean hastened to find Orderly's tin of metal polish to give the brass-bound edges of the table a thorough cleaning, while Orderly himself was sternly adjured to dust the tops of the doors and a window-ledge which had hitherto escaped detection since the hospital opened. Fatigue parties were told off to spring-clean the bathroom and scrub the pantry, while even Viney, the idle man of the ward, was so carried away by the tide of activity around him, that he found himself vigorously polishing the tiled tops of the ward tables before he realised what he was doing.

Staff Nurse M'Tavish and her probationer flew round the ward striving to bring the beds into a state of absolute perfection, and patients were ordered to tidy their lockers at all costs.

"Yours is just like a bookstall, Kilbride," remarked Staff Nurse M'Tavish in a tone of disgust. "You must get rid of some of those books."

Kilbride, who had been a schoolmaster in Dundee in the long distant days before the war, accepted the rebuke meekly, and spent a fruitless half-hour in endeavouring to compress his books into a smaller compass.

"I suppose it is regarded as a crime for a British soldier to be a book-lover," he remarked wearily.

"It is a foolish thing to have so many books in hospital," rejoined Staff Nurse M'Tavish with her customary good sense. "And, Viney, you cannot have all those bottles in your locker. Throw some away at once."

So the unlucky Viney wrestled with a miscellaneous assortment of the hair-washes, unguents, pomades, and scent-bottles in which his soul delighted, until, in despair, he conceived the brilliant idea of making them into a brown-paper parcel. This he deposited, as the only hiding-place available, in the empty ward grate, which was concealed from public view by a skilful arrangement of screens, and there it remained until half an hour later it was drawn forth by an indignant Staff Nurse.

"Who has dared to put a parcel in the grate?" she asked in a tone of fury. "Why, the Queen might have looked behind the screen, and then what would she have thought?"

The miscreant Viney was made to remove it forthwith, and as a last resort prevailed upon the ward-maid to take it home with her, and leave it there until the Royal visit was over and life became normal again.

Meanwhile dinner was hurried over in record time, the patients hardly noting any inequalities, imaginary or otherwise, in the distribution of food, which usually formed the staple topic of conversation.

"I wonder what I must say if the King asks me how I am getting on," said Jones in a worried tone.

"You must say 'Quite well, Sir, but better still if the doctor would put me on stout,'" rejoined the incorrigible Lamb.

"I hope it won't be like the hospital my brother was in," said M'Vean, "where they expected a visit from the King every day for a week, and every day the patients were put into clean clothes in honour of it, and in the end he never came."

"And they had all that trouble for nothing," said Viney in a sympathetic tone. Every one smiled, for Viney's objection to clean clothes was well known to be deep-rooted.

At two o'clock the outer gates of the hospital were closed. All leave for doctors and nurses was cancelled, and patients about to depart to convalescent homes, already in the full glory of their khaki uniforms, were told they must wait in the grounds until the Royal visit was over.

"If my things are anything like as much creased as yours, I shall refuse to go out in them," said Akerman, the stalwart 9th Lancer, who prided himself on belonging to the smartest regiment in the Service, looking at the bundle Johnson had just drawn from the pack store.

"If they will disinfect them, what can one do? These were quite new and uncreased when I put them in."

For by an immutable law all clothing, even if issued brand-new on the eve of departure from a hospital in France, has to be stoved when it reaches English soil.

"Of course it does not matter so much for you, being an Army Service man. In Ally Sloper's Cavalry it might perhaps pass muster, but if you were in a smart cavalry regiment you would not be able to wear them," added Akerman, with a look of contempt.

"You are jealous because you have to go on wearing your old blue hospital suit," retorted the unfortunate Johnson.

"Hoots, mon!" said Kilbride, "you should wear a kilt, and every one would think you had got it creased serving your King and Country in the trenches."

"Run and get an iron, Nurse," said Staff Nurse M'Tavish, when she saw the luckless Johnson's kit. "These trousers will never do."

There was only one iron in the block, and that was about the size usually associated with Mrs Ewing's 'A Flat Iron for a Farthing,' and the iron being very small and the gas-ring very large, what Orderly said when he took it off the fire, at the request of Nurse M'Tavish, had perhaps better not be recorded. Anyhow, he let it fall on the floor. But a strong will can overcome almost in-

superable difficulties, and by dint of skill and perseverance Nurse M'Tavish succeeded in transforming Johnson's trousers into something resembling human attire.

Just as three o'clock struck there was a rushing of feet, a sudden stampede, and the news went forth that the King and Queen had arrived.

"Remember, you must all stand at attention by your beds when their Majesties enter the Ward," said the anxious Staff Nurse.

"Shure, how are we to stand at attention when we are lying in our cots?" asked O'Ryan. "Is it putting our heels together and our arms to our sides we will be?"

"It will be barrack-room order," said Akerman, shifting wearily from one foot to the other, as he looked at the ordered perfection around him, while the afternoon wore slowly away as the King and Queen visited the various blocks and wards in the hospital. Ward B. came near the end.

"It seems so splendid," said Head Sister Grayson, "that all these hospitals should have sprung up in England, ready to hand as it were, in the hour of her need."

"It shows that half of these schools and workhouses were never really needed, or how could they do without them now? Many must have been half empty, and only existed to provide the matrons with salaries," argued Kilbride.

"Kilbride, it is very wrong of you to speak like that. The poor inmates from this institution have had to go to live in cottages and be looked after by the more able-bodied amongst them."

"But that is just what I am saying," persisted Kilbride; "if the more able-bodied can look after the infirm now, why were they ever looked after themselves?"

"Perhaps you do not know that seven of the poor old things have died," murmured a sympathetic nurse, who was listening to the discussion. "Just from the shock of being moved. They loved their own little rooms in this workhouse, and have truly given their lives for the welfare of the soldiers."

"In Scotland," maintained Kilbride, "we don't need such large workhouses, because a man's relations look after him when he is infirm, and he is not put in a poorhouse just because no one wants to be bothered with him. We don't have all these exorbitant poor-rates either, because the able-bodied are made to work."

"I don't know anything about poor laws in Scotland," said the Head Sister, "but I think it is beautiful to know that in England at least the poor are cared for in their old age, and pass the twilight of their days amidst pleasant surroundings."

"Yet you find that the self-respecting poor would sooner starve than go to the workhouse."

"That is the survival of prejudice," replied the Head Sister. "Besides, old age pensions have fostered their

notions of independence, and they prefer to scrape along on a few shillings a week, half-starved, in wretched insanitary surroundings."

"While the workhouses have to be kept going to provide a *raison d'être* for the staff."

"Kilbride, I won't have you speaking in that cynical way. It is very wrong to argue about matters of which you know nothing. No women are doing better work than the matrons and nurses in our workhouse infirmaries, which are often models of what hospitals should be. I should like to know if you have ever seen an infirmary."

Before Kilbride had time to answer, a murmur ran along, the King and Queen could be seen leaving Block V. and would be in Ward B. in another moment. Instantly the patients stood in statuesque attitudes by their cots, while the nurses grouped themselves in their prearranged places. The suspense grew breathless. The air itself seemed to quiver with suppressed excitement. Slowly footsteps were heard approaching; at last the great moment had come. The King and Queen were standing in the doorway.

"How nice the flowers look," said her Majesty, and the group continued on its way to inspect the Pack Store.

"And they never came into the ward after all," was the universal murmur.

"Ward B. always gets left out."

"I gave my knives an extra clean in case the Queen happened to look inside the knife-box," lamented the ward-maid. "And they did look lovely."

"Old Rotten might have left his parcel in the grate after all," added Lamb; "no one would have seen it."

But the excitement of the day was by no means over. Every one rushed out into the ground, which became a living sea of Sisters, Staff Nurses, probationers, patients resplendent in khaki and patients resigned in hospital blue. The royal car was surrounded and became the centre of much photographic effort. It was so much easier to take than their Majesties, as it remained stationary.

Presently the King and Queen reappeared, after inspecting the Pack Store, and entered their car, which forced its way with difficulty to the gates of the Hospital, closely surrounded on all sides by a seething crowd of enthusiasts. At last, amidst resounding cheers, their Majesties drove away.

"Then," said Lieutenant Burn, when narrating the events of the day to his wife, "we all hurried back, as fast as we could, to the officers' mess, feeling just ready for the A1 tea which had been prepared for the King and Queen, which they had no time to take; and you can imagine our feelings when we reached the room to find everything gone — a stupid fool of an orderly had cleared it all away."

IV. BIG WASH.

Twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays, that exciting game of chance "big wash" is played. This bears a superficial resemblance to the game of golf, the patients constituting the hazards or bunkers, and the various kinds of garments the number of holes to be played. It varies with the temperament and tenacity of the players, but in its main outlines it is always the same.

The game opens with a vast inchoate mass of dirty linen, piled high on the narrow strip of landing which separates Ward B. from Ward C. The two wards share their washing in common, which adds a sporting interest to the game. A purple-faced Orderly and an agitated Staff Nurse dive into the pile, and, as it were, drive off from the first tee by pulling a sheet from the heap. Sheets, pillow-cases, and towels represent the first three holes, which are straightforward and comparatively simple in character, although admittedly long-distance shots. For to count correctly forty-three sheets can tax mathematical powers of quite first-class order, especially when there is a crowd of patients in the background adding to the confusion in their efforts to render help. The situation at times becomes strained, when Orderly and Staff Nurse repeatedly fail to make their totals agree, and each is convinced that the other is in the wrong, the former inwardly and the latter openly. Yet when all is said, sheets are comparatively simple in character, as from their bulk they can rarely be mislaid even by the most careless patients.

With personal garments, which come next, it is far otherwise, and holes 4 and 5, flannel and cotton shirts, are two of the most difficult in the course. Shirts are so fatally easy to mislay, and patients, for some reason known to themselves but unapparent to every one else, frequently omit to change their shirts on washing morning.

Hole 6, counterpanes, is the easiest of all, as the Staff Nurse changes these herself, after closely inspecting the various shades of greyness of those in use on the beds; but the next hole, socks, more than compensates by its difficulty. The military authorities bravely recognise the fact that human feet differ in size, and do their best to cater for the various dimensions; but the laundry, with that aloofness which characterises those utilitarian institutions, recognises no such differences, and simply pairs the socks as they happen to come along. So Johnson, the burly transport driver, easily slips on his first sock, but finds the second defies all his efforts.

"Could you lend me a shoe-

horn, Sister?" he pants; "I can't get into this sock."

And a hasty tour has to be made in the ward and a large-sized sock taken from the puny Jones to complete his footwear. Not that Jones, despite his inability to wear the sock, parted from it willingly.

"I don't see," he grunts, "when I do 'appen to get a sock without a hole, why I should not be allowed to keep it."

This remark, ungracious as it may appear, was valuable in shedding a ray of light on the hopeless search for a missing sock. Twenty-five and a half pairs were safely piled up in a neat heap on the landing, but the last half was nowhere to be seen. "Has any one got a badly-frayed sock?" asked the probationer quietly, while the Staff Nurse and Orderly were pursuing their researches in Ward C.

"Do you think I am going to wear a thing like that?" said Roper, brandishing a sock in which the sole was almost entirely missing. "If I say I won't wear it, I won't, and no one can make me," he added with pride.

Holes 8 and 9, handkerchiefs and neckties, are very tricky. They seem so simple and yet prove so elusive. Hospital handkerchiefs are large, bright-red in colour, and harsh in texture, and fifty per cent of the patients receive a fresh handkerchief every Tuesday in exchange for the equally clean one they have just given up. The difficulty about handkerchiefs is that they possess an irresistible attraction for certain labouring sons of the North when about to go on sick furlough.

"It is just the thing to cover my canary's cage at neet," thought Bates, when the day of departure came, and he promptly annexed M'Vean's handkerchief from the top of his locker—being well aware that his own must be handed in with his kit or else he would be mulcted of the sum of fourpence. He was safely in the train before the prolonged search for the luckless M'Vean's missing property started, in which the ward had to submit to having its lockers ransacked, its beds unmade, and its veracity doubted. But all in vain; no handkerchief was forthcoming, and M'Vean had not only to endure repeated reference to his loss every time "Big Wash" came round, and hear the reiterated command of Nurse M'Tavish, "Be sure not to give M'Vean a handkerchief. Remember he has lost his," but also to contemplate the unpleasant fact that on leaving he would be made to pay for what he had not lost. And, being a Scot, that was the bitterest part of all.

Neckerchiefs—as Army Book No. 200 terms them—are red and very voluminous. Patients for the most part detest them, and delay putting them on as long as possible, until the doctor's visit makes it obligatory. Neckerchiefs also occa-

sionally disappear, and have been known to get lost; but their triangular shape makes them less generally useful than the square handkerchief, and their colour robs them of any charms as wearing apparel—unless possibly to a socialist. So their disappearances are few and far between.

The last holes of the course—Turkish towels and hospital suits—are short and simple. The chief question about suits is, will they fit; and as wards with tall patients seem to get nothing but small sizes sent up from the Store, there is all the excitement of a lottery in trying them on.

To Staff Nurse M'Tavish, fresh from four years' training amid the ordered perfection of a small Scotch hospital, the terrors of "big wash" came home with peculiar force.

"It's a fule country," she remarked bitterly, "and military red tape is the most fulish thing in it. I'm no used to all the writing and counting over a few bits of washing."

For in Maggie M'Tavish's hospital, patients had been numbers, not individuals, and no patient had ever succeeded in losing a garment—partly because a hawk-eyed nurse kept strict watch on his movements, and partly because his native common-sense told him that the hospital would infallibly make him refund any small articles he lost or appropriated to his own use. So the carelessness of the British soldier came with redoubled force, and his callousness in the face of personal loss was little less than astounding.

One Tuesday morning the terrors of "big wash" proved even more terrible than usual. The correct number of clean garments, as specified both in words and figures, in Check-book for Hospital Linen—Army Book No. 200—had been received and distributed. The first three holes had been accomplished, and all went well, until with the counting of the shirts a new and unpleasant difficulty arose. The flannel shirts totalled twenty-seven, the cotton twenty-five. Even repeated counting could not gloss over this unpleasant fact. "I have one flannel shirt too many, and one cotton shirt too few," exclaimed Staff Nurse M'Tavish rushing into Ward B.

The patients, who were busily engaged in discussing whose turn it was to have the small eggs for breakfast, waived aside the interruption.

"But I had the small ones yesterday," said the puny Jones. "I don't see why I should have them every day."

"You are on eggs," said Akerman loftily, "and have eggs every day, so your turn for small eggs must come oftener than ours."

"And here is one with a text, 'Vengeance is Mine, saith the Lord.' You can have that if you like to console you," said Lamb mischievously.

"I'll not . . ." began the almost tearful Jones.

"Jones, I'll no have you answering back," said Staff Nurse M'Tavish in her most

rasping voice. "Who is the fool who has put a clean flannel shirt in the wash?"

A sudden lull in the egg discussion enabled Staff Nurse M'Tavish to make herself heard, and by dint of close cross-examination, and discovering which patients were wearing flannel shirts at the moment, the culprit, Lance-Corporal Kilbride, was disclosed.

"Have you a flannel shirt on, Kilbride?"

"I have put mine to the wash, Sister, and I don't want another as the weather is so hot."

"And don't you know, Kilbride, that you must give up the same kit when you go out that you drew when you came in? What will you be saying to have the price of a new shirt docked out of your allowance, and all through your own stupidity?"

Kilbride, being a compatriot of Staff Nurse M'Tavish, speedily saw the force of the argument, and received the clean shirt back with gratitude.

"Now, I am a cotton shirt short," said the Staff Nurse, when a fresh recount still failed to disclose it. And the familiar round game was played.

"Have you changed your shirt, Jones?"

"Have you, Jackson?"

"And you, O'Ryan?"

"And you, Baines?" and so on, round the ward, but Staff Nurse M'Tavish drew a blank every time. She was just on the point of hurrying across to Ward C. when, away in the distance, a pile of clothes on a bed caught her eye.

"Who has still not changed their clothes?" she asked, her eyes flashing with anger. "Viney, you ought to be ashamed to give me so much trouble."

Viney, who seemed quite unabashed, handed over his bundle, which proved, on examination, to be much less valuable than had been hoped—a sheet which had somehow failed to be missed—necktie, socks, and towel.

"I put my shirt in your pile," he remarked in a tone of virtue, and Staff Nurse M'Tavish hurried across to Ward C. to pursue her researches.

"Have you changed your shirt, Pettinger?"

"Yes, Sister."

"Are you quite sure?"

"Indeed I am, Sister. I remember it tearing as I pulled it off." The search continued without success. "Run and look in the bathroom, Orderly," said Staff Nurse M'Tavish in despair; but all in vain—Orderly returned empty-handed.

Back into Ward B. she went, and the men were by this time busily discussing the iniquities of the cook in not rising earlier to cook the breakfast. "If the fellow can't get up in time, he ought to be sacked," said Jackson.

"It is simply wasting oatmeal to send it up like this," said Kilbride.

"It's not even skilly this

morning," lamented Lamb. "It is grains of oatmeal floating in water."

All this time a frail invalid, tucked away in a corner bed, had escaped unnoticed, and had been passed over in the first round of the game. His pallor and unobtrusiveness gave him a look as if he were not long for this world. But suddenly a movement caught the Staff Nurse's eye.

"Have you changed your shirt, Patsey?" she asked. Amid the general chatter his voice failed to carry. "Are you sure?"

A faint murmur, accompanied by a feeble fumbling, and a white corner was drawn from beneath his pillow.

"You have not changed?"

"I've been asleep," he began slowly; but he said no more, for with a bound Staff Nurse M'Tavish was beside him, and was shaking his frail body vigorously in her excitement.

"How can you be so troublesome," she cried. "Change your shirt this minute."

But all did not go well. The socks—strange, provoking, inexplicable as it may seem—totalled a pair too many, and a furtive movement on the part of Lamb revealed the fact that he was sitting at the breakfast-table in his bare feet.

"What do you mean by that, Lamb?" asked Staff Nurse M'Tavish angrily. "Where are your socks?"

"I have not got any to put on. You took away my dirty pair, and did not give me clean ones."

The Staff Nurse hastened to the pile, and then the horrid truth was borne upon her that the clean pair had been thrown in amongst the dirty. Laundries, like all human institutions, are liable to fall short of perfection, and even minute and prolonged search failed to disclose which was the clean pair. Twenty-six pairs of socks were unrolled, examined, and replaced, but the clean pair could not be identified with certainty, and in the end Staff Nurse M'Tavish drew a pair at random from the pile and presented them to the undeserving Lamb.

Only the last hole—bath-towels—remained to be played, and these were three in theory and three in practice, but they formed the subject of a grave rebuke to Sergeant Miller.

"Sergeant, did you have a bath yesterday?"

"No, Sister."

"But you went to the bathroom?"

"Yes, Sister, to have a wash yesterday afternoon."

"And you left your bath-towel behind."

"I am very sorry."

"I won't have such carelessness. How many times have I warned you? The other orderly might have found it and put it with his washing, and then we never should have got it back."

And Staff Nurse M'Tavish closed Army Book No. 200 with a sigh of relief.

V. VISITORS.

Three afternoons a week, between the allotted hours of two and four, the hospital is open to visitors, and these fall naturally into two categories. In the first may be placed near relations, actual or prospective, such as parents, wives or young ladies, who come to see the patients as individuals; and in the second, philanthropists, ministers of religion, and kind-hearted old ladies, who visit collectively. The former is by far the more popular class, except possibly when it includes uncles, who often display a misplaced pertinacity in inquiring what their relatives felt when they first saw the enemy, and how often they charged the Germans. At times the attentions of the latter are distinctly unwelcome, and patients have been known to resort to most devious subterfuges.

One glorious summer afternoon the probationer of Ward B., hurrying into the bathroom in quest of a bowl, was amazed to find the shrinking form of M'Vean behind the door. When all the world was gay and green, it seemed the most extraordinary taste to prefer to lurk in a dingy bathroom.

"What in the world are you doing, M'Vean?" she asked.

"I'm thinking I'll bide here this afternoon."

"But what a waste of a glorious day. Why don't you go in the grounds. Are you not expecting any visitors this afternoon?"

"Indeed I am, that's why I am here."

"Who is it?"

"A meenister from London, who has been asked by our meenister in Paisley to keep an eye on me. At least so he says, but I think myself he comes for the pleasure of talking. The last day he was here he gave me a homily as long as the books of Deuteronomy and Kings put together on the perils of a soldier's life, and when he said he would come again to-day I thought the bathroom was the best place for me."

"But he would never be able to find you in the grounds, M'Vean."

"I'm doubting I'd be safe there, Sister. The Rev. Proudfoot is a most determined man, and his last words to me were, I leave a thought with you until next time; so I'll no be rushing across his path to-day if I can help it."

Often there are sad, touching little meetings. Wives who have said good-bye to their dearest ones with dread in their hearts, and after months of aching anxiety, which knew no respite, meet them again on a bed of sickness, pale, haggard, altered, badly wounded, it may be, but their own dear ones again—back safe in England, and looked after with the tenderest care. Such meetings

hold much joy, even if there be sorrow too.

Strange inarticulate meetings, part of our sternly repressed natures, and our hatred of emotion which our Allies can never understand. There is none of the Frenchman's gay vivacity, none of the Belgian's demonstrative delight in these reunions, but they are none the less joyous. The first time Jones's mother came to see him, she entered the ward with shaking knees, for hospitals were strange and fearful places to her. When, after a moment's bewilderment, she discovered her boy in the long line of beds, pale, shaken with the haunted look of one who has seen Death still in his eyes, her courage failed her. The moment she drew near, Jones flung his arms round her neck and burst into tears, while she, distressed to find her mischievous boy so changed, sobbed in turn, until in the midst of their embrace the lid of the jar of calf's-foot jelly she was clasping became loosened, and the jelly descended in a moist mass on the chest of the luckless Jones. After that tears became an impossibility, and Mrs Jones, although her thrifty soul was vexed at the waste, began unconsciously to look upon the brighter side of life.

Young ladies are very frequent visitors, and these may be "my fiancy" who has come from a distance specially to see him, as the soldier proudly explains; or more commonly "cousins" from the near neighbourhood, who have obtained passes by some mysterious means unknown to the authorities, and as a rule are not at all particular which patient they visit. Indeed, a popular warrior may have as many as six or seven cousins, all equally unknown to him, in the same afternoon. Their behaviour is almost always the same. They sit jauntily on the edge of the bed, supremely conscious of their best clothes, until chased off by an indignant nurse. Then they subside into a chair, drawn as close to the patient's bed as possible. They come laden with boxes of indifferent chocolates and enormous bunches of crudely-coloured flowers, as offerings to the wounded, and their conversational powers consist of whispers punctuated by giggles, if they are enjoying a *tête-à-tête*, or talking at the top of their voices in parties of five or six.

"It is as bad as the gramophone," said Kilbride, seeking refuge with his book in an empty ward. "Every one talks at once, and nobody listens to what any one else is saying."

For they have this in common with the Teutonic marauders — once erroneously called our cousins—that they all talk at the same time, and nobody dreams of waiting until his neighbour has finished his remark.

Ministers of religion bear a certain resemblance to one another, especially in the blank disappointment and feeling of resentment they evince when none of their denomination are

to be found in the ward. It seems as if their branch of religion were not prospering as it should be. The hospital authorities thoughtfully provide tin discs, coloured red, white, blue, yellow, or green, to show whether the patient is Church of England, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, or any other denomination. These are hung over the head of the beds to assist the minister in the search for his flock.

"Though why cardboard would not have answered just as well, I fail to see," said Kilbride, on being initiated to the system, "except that it would not have cost the Government half so much."

"It is not on matters connected with religion that you would wish to save, I hope," replied the Rev. Proudfoot in a frigid voice, and sought another guide as soon as possible.

Kind-hearted old ladies are perhaps the most numerous class of all. They stagger into the ward laden with dear impossible old books which they have dug out of their domestic archives for the patients to read, and change them with unfailing regularity the following week, quite oblivious of the fact that no patient had opened them. Others bring gramophone records in the form of hymn tunes. "And such good records too. This one cost fifteen shillings," the donor proudly remarked. So in the evenings the ward resounds with "Abide with Me" and "The Church's one Foundation," sandwiched in with "Tipperary," "Hello, hello, and who's your Lady Friend," and other incongruities which the donor in her kindness of heart hardly could have contemplated.

One sultry afternoon in July one of the kind-hearted old ladies presented an enormous basket of red currants to Ward B., which Staff Nurse M'Tavish was rather inclined to regard in the light of a "red elephant." However, her cool, customary, Scotch commonsense came to her aid, and she decreed that the patients must eat them with their tea; and when tea-time came, the ward, with that inborn British hatred of anything new, voted it "a queer kind of thing to give one at tea-time."

"Did you ever see red currants for tea before, Nurse?" Lamb asked the probationer in an injured voice.

"No, I don't think I ever did," she replied; "but I expect some one thought — red currants — the wounded — let us send them to the hospital."

"No," said Kilbride, after a moment's reflection, "they thought — red currants — the price of sugar — let us send them to the hospital."

But the best joke of all was played upon Ward B. by a dear old lady in a black silk mantle and taffeta gown one Sunday afternoon. She arrived with an enormous cardboard box which was quite heavy, and although the chauffeur carried it as far as the ward door, she would never have got inside the ward without the assist-

ance of Kilbride. When it had been placed in safety on the ward table it was seen to be subdivided into fifteen or twenty smaller boxes, each containing fifty Gold Flake cigarettes. From that instant every movement of the old lady was followed with the most flattering attention, for Woodbines may enjoy unbounded popularity, but the more generous proportions of Gold Flake make them even better.

"Good afternoon," said the dear old lady. "You will see I have brought you some cigarettes. I was talking the other day to a friend just back from the Front — an officer, you know—who was in charge of a Machine Gun section—such a terrible time he had been having out there, poor fellow—and he said to me, as soon as he heard that I was visiting this hospital, 'Be sure to take the men Gold Flake cigarettes. Remember all they have done for you, and take them the very best. Gold Flake is the only thing that has kept my spirits up out there and made life bearable.' So I wrote down the name at once on a piece of paper, because my memory is not what it used to be, and here they are."

The old lady solemnly took one of the smaller boxes, and, beginning with Lamb, who was in the corner bed, went carefully round the ward, to each man in turn, and handed him one cigarette. Then her tour completed, she closed the lid, replaced it in the larger box, and turning to Kilbride, said—

"Perhaps you will carry this for me into one of the other wards."

As soon as they were gone, Ward B. gave itself up to merriment.

"I wonder if my friend, just back from the Front, got more than one cigarette at a time, when she made him a present," remarked Lamb.

"I thought we were going to have a whole box each at least, judging by the size of the outlay," said Viney bitterly.

"And all that long rigmarole, too, made it seem more promising," added Jackson.

"I should like to see old Pettinger's face when she hands him one cigarette," said M'Vean; "it will be as good as the pantomime."

VI. VINEY'S STOUT.

Ward B. were busily engaged in discussing their favourite subject of conversation — the absurd rate of pay for A.S.C. men in the motor transport.

"Do you call it fair," asked M'Vean bitterly, "six shillings a day for the safest job going, miles behind the firing line, and a shilling a day for risking your life every minute in the trenches?"

"You forget that the motor transport requires skilled men,"

retorted Viney, commonly known to his ward-mates by the unlovely sobriquet "Rotten." "They are mechanics, and any one can get in the trenches who knows how to sight a rifle."

"Fire a rifle," yelled Jackson; "and what about section drill and platoon drill?"

"You A.S.C. men are so touchy, you know," interrupted Kilbride, "you see an insult in everything. Yesterday I was helping a lady to distribute some books in a ward downstairs, and I saw a Motor Transport man in bed, and I said to him quite innocently, 'Why, you are the first Motor Transport man I have seen wounded. Were you in the neighbourhood of Ypres?' and he simply turned on me like an angry bear and growled, 'Ur! Ur! Now, what do you mean by that; don't you think A.S.C. men are as good as the others?' And I had not meant to hurt his feelings at all."

"And here's old Rotten, who has never been to the front, and has had a fortnight in the army before coming into hospital, given chicken every day, and now he has got round the doctor to put him on stout. And I've had months in the trenches, and no one has ever put me on chicken or stout," murmured the infantile Jones mournfully.

"Well," said the unpopular Viney, raising his head from the copy of 'John Bull' in which he had been deeply engrossed, "you may like to know that as Talbot has gone to a convalescent home, I am to have his bottle of stout as well as my own to-day."

For by one of those inscrutable hospital laws, a patient's meals remain on the diet-sheet 24 hours after his departure, and the surplus food has to be disposed of by means of patients or ward-maids or some other channel. Indeed a patient is frequently at the height of his popularity when he has just left. When dinner-time came Viney drank his bottle of stout with great and ostentatious enjoyment, ignoring the universal signs of disapproval around him.

About three o'clock in the afternoon a bottle of stout appeared on the cupboard facing the ward door, and Viney from his seat in the corner eyed it with unconcealed impatience. At last the suspense became intolerable.

"Do you think I might have Talbot's bottle of stout now?" Viney asked Nurse M'Tavish. "I seem to have a terrible thirst this afternoon."

When permission was given, he flew for a corkscrew and opened the bottle with alacrity. A sigh of anticipation and a long drink was followed by an indescribable grimace. The mischief-loving Lamb had filled the empty stout bottle with a horrible decoction of cold tea, treacle, and some grains of rice to act as a ferment, and Viney's innate greed had caused the success of the joke.

"I'm poisoned," he gasped, and when the laughter of the ward brought home the point

of the joke, his fury knew no bounds.

But next day at dinner-time no bottle of stout was forthcoming.

"Where's my stout?" growled Viney.

"It nearly made you sick yesterday, so what's the use of worrying," said M'Vean.

"It must be somewhere in the ward," said Jones casually. "I saw it come in."

"You are like a lot of children," said Viney disconsolately. "I suppose you think it funny."

"Well, isn't it," said Lamb.

Whereupon Viney went to lay his grievance before Nurse M'Tavish.

"I'm on stout, by doctor's orders, and I am entitled to a bottle."

But a careful search proved unavailing, and at last Orderly was sent on a voyage of discovery, with drastic orders not to return empty-handed; but all in vain—no bottle of stout could be found.

At this point Nurse M'Tavish's conscience began to awaken. Her authority was being defied, and a joke was being carried to unpermissible lengths. Armed with a bandage as a symbol of Justice, she walked into the ward and proceeded to question each patient in turn. "Do you know anything about the stout, M'Vean?"

"I have not seen it, Sister."

"You assure me, on your honour?"

"No."

"And you, Lamb?"

"I have not touched it." And so on until every patient had been catechised. A painful pause ensued.

"Then," said Nurse M'Tavish in a strangled voice, "some one has told me a lie. I shall report the matter to the Head Sister. Your conduct is disgraceful, and you are all equally to blame."

"In being accessories after the fact," said Kilbride; but his observation was ignored.

And all the time the missing bottle of stout was reposing beneath the bolster of Viney's bed, as thirteen patients in Ward B. were perfectly well aware.

"In fact, he'd be disappointed if he did happen to find it now," said Jones. "He'd rather have it as a grievance."

But Nurse M'Tavish was really shocked to feel that one of her own patients could tell a lie. It seemed as if her influence were of little account, and moreover, she had quite a vivid conception of the fiery torments to which liars went. So, early in the afternoon, she laid the whole matter before the Head Sister.

"It is not the stout but the lie which I mind so much. I shall never feel the same to those men again," she repeated almost tearfully; and a little later the Head Sister came bustling into Ward B. with the manner of the Lord High Executioner.

"I am most seriously annoyed about this bottle of stout," she began. "A joke

carried too far is no joke. There is nothing amusing in such childishness. I shall ask each of you in turn if you hid the bottle of stout, and I shall expect you to speak the truth."

During this dialogue Viney, from his favourite seat in the arm-chair, looked on with deep interest.

"Jones, do you know where the stout is?"

"I would rather not answer that question, Sister, but I had nothing to do with hiding it."

"I hope you are speaking the truth."

"Yes, Sister."

And no one proved more communicative until it was Akerman's turn.

Akerman was busily engaged in writing a letter, and had paid little heed to what was going on in the ward, as deafness prevented him from taking part in general discussions.

"And do you know anything about it, Akerman?" said the Head Sister.

"Yes, Sister," said Akerman, looking up brightly from his writing-pad.

Instantly the light of conquest shone in her eyes, and she stepped forward in triumph. At last the mystery was to be solved.

"What do you know?"

"What is it, Sister?"

The light died away. "About this stout?"

"I don't know anything."

"Then," said the Head Sister, looking solemnly at her watch, "as no one is brave enough to speak the truth in public, I shall sit in my Duty Room for one hour, and during that time I shall expect the culprit to come to me privately and confess his guilt. Otherwise the matter may have to go before the Colonel."

"And that's what you call an ulti — ulti — what?" said Jones.

"An ultimatum," said Kilbride. "And an ultimatum is always a weak thing unless you have the means to enforce it."

And during the hour which ensued no power proved strong enough to break the conspiracy of silence. The lighter-minded members of the ward joked whenever one of their number left the room.

"You are off to confess, Lamb. Mind you tell her all about it."

"You are only just in time, M'Vean. Five minutes to get it done."

But the allotted hour came and went, and the deed was still unconfessed. Only Kilbride, during the absence of Viney, drew the bottle from its hiding-place and placed it silently and unobserved on the centre of the table in the Duty Room. There it was found a few minutes later by the Head Sister, to her undisguised annoyance—for to hide a delinquency is bad, but to find amusement in it is infinitely worse.

And from that day to this the deed goes unacknowledged and unconfessed. For no one happened to hear Lamb remark to his friend Jones:

"It was worth getting old Buchanan to come over from Ward F. to hide the stout for us, if only to see the disgust on Rotten's face when he heard that the Colonel was not going to do anything about the matter after all."

VII. THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL.

There was universal regret when Ward B. learnt that Rifleman O'Ryan was to go to a convalescent home. His gift for paying charming compliments, his skill in making rapid sketches in the ubiquitous albums, and his indolent good nature, had endeared him alike to staff nurses, probationers, and fellow-patients. No one ever went to borrow a cigarette or a match from O'Ryan and came away disappointed—even if O'Ryan himself had hastily to appropriate the desired object from the locker of a parsimonious neighbour; and if caught *in flagrante delicto* his charming smile and "Shure I'll pay you back when I get the chance," disarmed criticism.

So it was with deep regret and many prolonged good-byes that O'Ryan left his comrades in Ward B. The long day dragged on to its close, while a sense of loss pervaded everything. The authorities were captious and the patients were fractious, and the rub and tear of hospital life came much in evidence. But at six o'clock, just as things were becoming intolerable, the door of the ward was flung open and a heated sergeant entered, followed by the downcast figure of O'Ryan, who flung himself into a chair beside his former bed.

The ward gasped.

"Shure, do you think I'm a ghost?" said the indignant O'Ryan, "that you have never a word of welcome for me? I ask you, could I stay in the place and have them slobbering over poor wounded Tommy a minute longer. It is run for show and self-glorification and not for the comfort of the patients, whatever any one may say."

"But what did you do, Micky?" asked the irrepressible Lamb, knowing well that there was nothing O'Ryan more resented than to be addressed by an abbreviated patronymic.

But this time, in the stress of his emotion, it passed unnoticed.

"I think the cream of it," began O'Ryan thoughtfully, "is that the Colonel came to me just before we started and said that he had specially arranged for me to go to St Quentin's, as it was one of the most comfortable convalescent homes in the county. And I said, 'Shure, I would like it fine, if he could speak well of it,' for he is a mighty hard gentleman to please, as we all know.

"So I started in the motor about three o'clock, and when we got to St Quentin's there

was Mrs Thornicliffe — the Commandant, as I afterwards learnt to call her — and a number of Red Cross nurses to greet us on the steps. The first glimpse I had of the ward, I thought it fine, but I little knew then how we were to suffer for its perfections. Yet even then there was something about that seemed unnatural; everything was in its place, every bed was exactly in line, and every one was covered with a white quilt with pink roses. How I grew to hate the sight of these roses before I left.

"After we had sat in the hall a little time, and let the ladies fuss over us as wounded heroes, I slipped away quietly; for you know it is not easy to remain a hero after they find that you broke your leg by stepping in a hole in the dark in England, and not in leading a forlorn hope in France. So explanations being things that do not hurt by waiting, I left the others to entertain the ladies with their adventures in France. We were all wearing wonderful pale-brown suits, with bright-red collars and cuffs, which Mrs Thornicliffe had designed for the hospital; and we all looked like the fellows you see on the sea-shore, only we did not feel half as cheerful. All the old patients sat by, never saying a word, and looking as dull as ditch-water, until one of them whispered to me—

"'It is a terrible hard place to get out of. Mrs Thornicliffe says it is for our own good she keeps us here, but I often wish she would not have quite so much consideration for us.'

"So I slipped into the ward and began to tidy my things" —here a smile went round the ward, for O'Ryan was notoriously the most untidy man the hospital had ever known—"and when everything was in order, I lay down on my bed to rest, as my leg was beginning to ache. Presently Mrs Thornicliffe came into the ward, and the moment she saw me she rushed to me like a cat pouncing on a bird.

"'Really, O'Ryan, while you are with us you must remember to obey the rules. No smoking is ever allowed in the ward, and no patients may lie on their beds. Just think how it creases them.' It seemed to me if that were the case, the best thing to do was to get out of the ward as quickly as possible; and then, for the first time, I noticed, pinned up on the wall, by the side of the printed regulations for military hospitals, was a typewritten list of rules of their own making—

> No smoking is allowed in the ward.
>
> No patients may play cards for money under any circumstances.
>
> No patient may leave the grounds without permission from the Commandant.

and I do not know how many more besides.

"While I was studying them, Mrs Thornicliffe came along and said—

"'I hope you will do your best to keep the rules, O'Ryan.' And I said—

"'Shure, Sister, I come from a law-abiding country, and although I hoped before I came here that there would be no rules and regulations, yet being as there are, I will do my best to please you.'

"Instead of looking pleased at my words, she grew as black as thunder, and said—

"'Kindly remember not to address me as Sister. I am the Commandant of this hospital. There is no question of obeying rules just when you feel inclined. I am responsible to the War Office for the discipline, and must see that rules are obeyed.'"

The ward smiled, for O'Ryan's capacity for rule-breaking had been one of his most endearing qualities.

"So I went out and sat in the sitting-room, which was full of fluffy cushions you were not to crease and flowers you might not handle, and I dropped into a hard chair and felt tired of everything. And when tea-time came there was a splendid tea put on the table, but never a thing could I touch. So I said to myself, 'Mick, my boy, this is bad,' and I slipped out of the French window while Mrs Thornicliffe was busily pouring out cups of tea, and was away out of sight before she missed me. I went through the big gates and down the road to the village, and there stood the Barley Mow ready to my hand, and in a minute I knew what I had been wanting all afternoon. In I went, in my pierrot clothes, round red collar and slashed sleeves, and the barman says to me, 'We are not allowed to serve Mrs Thornicliffe's patients.' And I says to him straight, 'Mrs Thornicliffe be hanged. I am a *bona-fide* traveller. Shut your eyes, man, and you will never see the red slashings and Toby collar, and who's to know I am a patient then?' Having a keen eye to business he saw the reason of it, and I gulped down a glass of whisky and was feeling myself again, when poor old Pat Simmons, who lost his right leg at Armentières, hobbled past, and I hurried after him and was having a word with him, when I saw Mrs Thornicliffe making frantic signals to me from the Park gate. 'O'Ryan,' she says, in a voice like a bull, 'must I speak to you again. You tell me you wish there were no rules and regulations, but surely you have much to be thankful for, and should obey our few rules gladly. How would you like to be like that poor mutilated man there?' pointing to Pat, who was hobbling along behind.

"With that I lost my temper entirely. 'Is it wishing to insult me, you are?' I cried. 'I may not have been out to the Front yet, but I have looked Death in the face more than once in my life, and shall

not be afraid to do so again. So why do you compare me with a poor lorn creature who will never know another day's real enjoyment?'

"'I am afraid you have been drinking, O'Ryan,' says she in a refrigerator voice. 'Remember I am responsible to the War Office and rank as a lieutenant in the army, and a bad report from me can cancel your sick furlough.'

"'Then I had better see Mr Thornicliffe about it,' I answers.

"'Mr Thornicliffe has nothing whatever to do with the management of this hospital. I am the Commandant.' I saw in a minute how the wind lay. 'Then,' says I, 'will you kindly telephone to the Colonel of the Military Hospital at Blacktown and say I wish to return.' Away she went, looking blacker than ever, and I sat down in the ward on a hard wooden chair and gazed at the roses on the quilts and the red crosses on the curtains of the lockers until my head swam. I was all alone, as every one else was in the sitting-room, listening to a reciter who was telling them about a little girl who behaved as she should do in hospital,—I believe she died in the end, though:—

"'Nay, you remember our Emmie,
you used to send her the flowers,
How she would smile at 'em, play with 'em, talk to 'em hours after hours.
They that can wander at will, where the works of the Lord are revealed,
Little guess what joy can be got from a cowslip out of the field.'

"Just at this point I heard Mrs Thornicliffe's voice at the other end of the ward, but it was too dark to see what she was doing. 'He is quite undisciplined,' she was saying. 'He could never have forgotten himself and spoken to me the way he did unless he had been intoxicated. Of course such ingratitude is very rare, but sometimes it almost seems as if one could do too much for the soldiers.'

"'Hush, my dear,' said Mr Thornicliffe in a soothing voice. 'You must remember all the soldiers have done for us.'

"'But he has never been to the Front,' she said in an injured tone. 'That makes it all the more inexcusable.'

"Just at that moment she caught sight of me, and, sweeping down the ward, said: 'O'Ryan, I have telephoned to the military authorities at Blacktown to tell them that I cannot possibly keep you, as you are quite unamenable to discipline. They are sending an escort for you shortly.'

"For all the world as if she had given orders for a firing party, and I was about to step into my grave. I think I was even gladder than she was when I heard the motor draw up at the door and saw the sergeant get out. She led him into the hall, where I was standing with the other patients — for no one felt inclined to settle to anything while such stirring events were going on,—and she took her finger and point-

ed at me, saying, 'That's the man.' 'Yes,' says I to the sergeant. 'Shure I am the happy man who is escaping from here.' And with that I stepped into the car, and I am back where you see me now."

Ward B. soothed and pampered O'Ryan until his ruffled feelings were calmed, and no hero returning from the war could have been received with greater honour or listened to with more deference. The authorities, on the other hand, viewed his case with a divided mind — some condemning him as one who had wrongly set discipline at defiance; others, who knew Mrs Thornicliffe, condoning his deeds as those of one who had acted under great provocation.

In the fulness of time O'Ryan summed up the situation thus—

"Those convalescent homes are all very well for docile people who like to be fussed over, but for plain downright men like you and me they are no better than a gilt canary cage with glass sides, in which you are afraid to move."

"But O'Ryan was always so headstrong," said the puny Jones admiringly.

GOD'S HILL.

I.

THIS cannot be described as a particularly pleasant story. It is not indeed a story at all in the proper sense, but rather a record of aimless incidents connected only in so far as they centre round one particular locality. What lends to this history such interest as it may possess is the peculiar character of that locality.

If it be true that all houses where men have died—particularly those wherein they have died by strange and sudden forms—are indubitably haunted, one would be led to suppose that Indian bungalows would be queer places. So, in point of fact, they are. All Indian bungalows are to a greater or less degree haunted—this is a mere commonplace, and no sensible man would tell you otherwise—but in so many of them the queer occurrences consist in casual manifestations having no apparent bearing upon anything whatever, and lacking altogether a story to which to cling. There is the bungalow of the Trotting Cat—normal cats do not trot—at Masulipatam, and there is a big Travellers' Bungalow near Hylarpet, where one's servant comes at intervals rather sheepishly and asks if master called; master has not called, but has a curious subconscious persuasion that he did hear a moment or so back something very like the long-drawn "Bo-o-y," which is the domestic summons all over South India. These are interesting in their way, but fail in the last resort because nobody has ever been able to suggest what the Trotting Cat really is, or who is the uneasy sahib who still shouts aloud in the resthouse, or what in the world it can be that he wants. The Forest Bungalow at Barachi—you call this "Burchy"—was equally unsatisfactory, but differed from these, for though in the way of manifestations it was poor—indeed, bafflingly unproductive—it was connected with two very remarkable stories. The first of these was the history of Captain Fernandez, and the second was the very objectionable anecdote of the Hairy Trunk.

The Barachi bungalow was built by Captain Fernandez, and it stood, as should all houses, upon a rock. The rock was called, in the vernacular, God's Hill. In support of this name there could be adduced a nameless and undated ruin, conceivably a small Hindu shrine, which stood perched upon its very summit. There was little else, however, that could be called as evidence, for to look at it was a sable and sinister place. It stood in the wide and handsome valley of the Palamadhi, where the river

flows through the big walled plain of Bandha, with the Mohnd and Samsuri Hills throwing an arm round it on either side. From Mamindi, which is a considerable peak of the Mohnds, you may look all over this plain; you may note the river flowing through a belt of paddy-fields; on it you will see Bandha, a goodly city girt with topes of cocoa-nut and palmyra, with the shiny iron chimney of the sugar factory sticking up like a signpost. You will see the main road entering the plain through a sort of pass or glack at the south end, and winding along over an endless series of terra-cotta brick culverts; and just between you and the road, foreshortened against the plain, there lies this dark and solitary rock—God's Hill. The little village of Barachi you cannot see, for that lies on the other side of the hill, but you can see very well what remains of Fernandez' bungalow, for that was built, as was natural to him, on the side away from men.

Fernandez came, like many another villain, of a thoroughly respectable stock—sound Calcutta Eurasian traders. His father had risen to no great eminence, but his brother Daniel, by careful and prolonged obsequiousness, caught the eye of those in high places, throve mightily, cut himself adrift from the pettiness of city retail, and striking south set up the sugar factory at Bandha. Daniel loved Government, but the Captain — the regiment in which he obtained this rank is not now heard of —hated them for that they interfered with the courses of life he loved to pursue. But most of all he hated the English, whose sahibs laughed at his military aspirations, and whose ladies, disdaining the fascination of his flashing teeth and eyes, spoke of him simply as "impossible." This was in the earlier fifties, but before that grim decade was over the turn of Fernandez came — and he damned himself and his house for ever by taking it. This is no place to write of the things he did—it does not do to think them of any in whose veins there ran the least drop of European blood—but they drove him south early in '59 upon his brother's tracks to Bandha, and there he built the bungalow the traces of which stand upon God's Hill to this day. He built it about a hundred feet up—a third of the way to the top — hewing a niche out of the rock and cutting a flight of steps in the hill face. There he sat himself down, partly because the place was out of the way, and partly to torment his worthy brother, whom he hated—but did not hesitate to rob.

It is strange how excellent an imitation of the lowermost slopes of Avernus can be produced — if you have but the taste for it—in any reasonably lonely house. The representation achieved by Captain Fernandez at God's Hill must have been, from all accounts, lifelike. That was an awful house. Strange men and sometimes women came and

went, riding in Fernandez' old-fashioned coach or on one of his many elephants, for he did not lack for money. At times, too, they said, there came Things and Persons quite other than men and women. Not often can there have stood on the face of the unhappy earth a place more evil than this big sad-coloured house, and never can there have gathered more foul congregations. It is an historic fact that there were found afterwards in that house shrines, apparently in use, to the most remarkable deities, and traces of doings and practices of a quite unusual kind—even in India. It came, therefore, as no sort of surprise when one wild night a terrible uproar broke out in the place, and in the morning Fernandez was not. One end of the house had been struck by lightning and partially burnt, and there was a good deal of confusion inside, but of Fernandez not a trace has been seen from that day to this. True, years later, some workmen came upon a deep well hidden in the rock, and at the bottom of this well there lay some human bones—but there was nothing at all to show they were Fernandez. There were a number of people to whom they might have belonged. But the things the villagers of Barachi saw that night flying about and away from the house would raise the hair of the boldest. This was idle superstition; but there was a curious unanimity in the tradition of a tall thin man riding on a white horse, who fled off madly towards the orests of the Mohnds. This may have been the devil or it may have been Fernandez, but in either event what happened in that house that night no one has yet dared to suggest. Personally I see no need for any devil; Fernandez and the incredibly evil memory he left behind him was devil enough.

It transpired that shortly after this date the Forest Department were moved to open up some new reserves in the Mohnds, and, seeking a bungalow for their officers, made use of what the lightning blast and the ravages of the Aryan brother had left of God's Hill. The young men of the Forest Department are much used to lonely places, and have sound and sober nerves; very few of them, also, had ever heard of Fernandez. It was therefore as a Forest Bungalow — an ordinary traveller's bungalow for Forest Officers—that it became the scene of the incident of the Hairy Trunk a year or two later. Some connect this with Fernandez, some not. You shall hear.

It occurs here that there may be among those who read some few who have never seen a Hairy Trunk. They have, I believe, a proper designation—Barcelona or Kidderminster or some such thing—but no one knows it. They are just ordinary cowhide trunks, with the difference that the hair is left on all over the outside. There is absolutely nothing whatever against them as articles of luggage, though for some reason one does not see them much in these days. To

come upon one in the night in a strange room is not the most pleasant of sensations, but in themselves they are quite harmless and useful domestic articles.

The Hairy Trunk came to God's Hill in an ordinary manner enough. It came one day slung between a couple of droning coolies, with a very old man, who looked like some sort of lower servant in charge. The bungalow watcher, also a man of immense age, watched it coming unsteadily up the narrow ghat of steps cut in the rock, by which alone access was possible to Fernandez' bungalow, and rousing himself with a weary sigh, went forth and inquired whose *saman*—that is to say, luggage—was this. The old man in charge answered with a single word "*Wastaru*," which is Telugu for "They will come." On being asked who would come, he replied again "*Wastaru*." The bungalow watcher then opened up the house in the hopeless and cheerless way of his kind, asking no further questions. They put the Hairy Trunk in the main room of the bungalow, standing against the end wall, and they went away. They never reappeared, and they who were to come came not at all. The Hairy Trunk remained in the main room of the bungalow. There it stood.

About six weeks afterwards there fell a terrible night of thunder and rain, and in the midst of it there rode up to God's Hill a young officer of the Forest Department. It was a terrible night — rain that was more like a thin river flowing over the land, and lightning that was rather flashes of brilliant darkness. The young Forest Officer was preparing to spend a miserable night when he became conscious of voices and lights without, and there entered the Assistant Collector of the District and the Assistant Superintendent of Police. Everything now went merrily: dinner was served in style, and during dinner the history of the Hairy Trunk's arrival was extracted from the bungalow watcher. He, being an old man, said it had been there six months at least. It was the centre of much interest, but there was no chink or cranny through which one might catch a glimpse of the interior, and no mark on the exterior whatsoever. It was regarded as disappointing, and it was not till dinner was over and the servants were gone from the room that one bold spirit—it is thought the Policeman—suggested that the Hairy Trunk should be opened once for all.

The servants waiting outside in the passage heard the sahibs discussing a long time among themselves, and the Forest Sahib seemed to be arguing against the others. Then after a time they began to move about the room, the Hairy Trunk was bumped this way and that, there were sounds of exertion as of men who tried to raise a weight, and at last a crash as of a door flung suddenly back.

After that there was no noise at all.

Presently one of the servants peeped into the room; he fled instantly, calling on nameless gods, and summoned his fellows. The three sahibs were still in the room—the Forest Sahib lying back in a chair at table, the Collector Sahib fallen on the floor and leaning against the wall between the table and the Hairy Trunk, and the Police Sahib face downwards inside the Trunk itself. On their faces rested very vivid expressions, or rather, as it seemed, one expression in three stages. The Forest Officer looked keenly and expectantly interested, the Assistant Collector bore a look of startled horror or realisation, and the face of the Policeman when they lifted him out of the Hairy Trunk was like nothing that has ever been on earth. In the trunk there was nothing but the almost mummified body of an infant. Experts subsequently said that the infant had been practically, if not purely, white.

There were two theories to account for this curious episode. Hearty young men do not expire from terror at the sight of mummified infants, and in any case at least one of them could never have seen it. One theory therefore was, that the servants had poisoned their masters. But in that case, what was the Policeman doing in the Hairy Trunk? In any event this idea could be—and presently was—disproved. The second theory was that the infant had been polished off by pumping poisonous gas into the trunk through the keyhole—which was indeed found to have been sealed,—and that when the Policeman in his zeal threw back the lid this gas rushed out in volumes and overwhelmed them all. But it must have been a thoroughly curious gas; for it killed at ten yards without giving the victim so much time as would move a muscle of his face, it left no smell or stuffiness in a closely shuttered room, and it killed without any of the ordinary symptoms of gas-poisoning.

I once asked a distinguished Doctor Sahib if there was any such gas; he said there was not. I then asked him what he thought it could have been; he said he did not know. Then I said, "If a second Hairy Trunk were left at Barachi would you open it?" He replied with real fervour that he would sooner see me damned.

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II.

An able pen has elsewhere written the story of another house accursed—that celebrated place of evil omen, "Sudden Death Lodge" at Karabad. Compared with the case of God's Hill, that was a story easier to tell, easier

to explain, more diverting perhaps to read. At Sudden Death Lodge there were decently tangible manifestations, there were certainly clear and definite results. But I never heard of any one who saw a ghost at God's Hill, nor did it normally bring about the end of those who sojourned within its walls. It simply exercised upon them a perfectly abominable influence; in most cases men sank into a violent and hideous depression of which nothing could clear them, but there were instances where this depression was changed into murderous rages or unspeakable impulses totally foreign to the real character of the victim. One had the idea that something about the place was bearing down upon one, hunting one, assailing one with a steady and fatal assault. There was nothing on earth to account for this, for as Travellers' Bungalows in India go, God's Hill was a delight. It stood nicely up on the hill, it was away from the sounds and smells of the village, its rooms and verandahs were cool and spacious. And yet one could not live there without incredible misery.

Perhaps the best case of this kind is that of Mottram, the District Board Engineer. Mottram was that type of man who is described as "hard bitten"; he belonged to the old school and knew a great deal about India, having experienced — as men in India must, so long as Government discourages early marriages — much varied domesticity of the Oriental type. Similarly, as such men do, he went home on long leave and brought back with him a particularly charming English wife, a good deal younger than himself. Mottram was the last man to see ghosts, or to come under any sort of supernatural influence whatever; he believed in whist, departmental transfers, and the Club, yet on the first night he took his new wife to God's Hill he had an unpleasant experience. About one in the morning Mrs Mottram—they were sleeping in separate rooms because Mrs Mottram liked a light and Mottram didn't — heard suspicious sounds from the other end of the bungalow. She went along and found her husband sleeping very heavily, gasping in a peculiar way. Being a wise woman, she woke him up without delay.

"What's the matter, Bill?" said she.

Mottram sat up in bed, and the sweat began to run from him like a river.

"What a rotten dream," said he; "I thought something was trying to strangle me. And yet it wasn't exactly that either."

"Poor old Bill," said Mrs Mottram. "It's liver."

"I never had a liver in my life," protested Mottram. "It was rather odd. The thing seemed to be pushing me down somewhere. Like when you're coming up after a big dive and some fool puts his hand on your head."

"Have you any fever?" said the practical Mrs Mottram.

"None," said Mottram. "What on earth was it?"

"Well, never mind now, anyway," said his wife. "Go to sleep again, and I'll sit beside you till morning."

There are only two points which distinguish this from a perfectly common occurrence—the first, Mrs Mottram's instinct that she ought to sit beside her husband till morning, which really seemed scarcely necessary on the apparent symptoms; and the second, Mottram's undying conviction that by his wife's waking him up that night he was saved from something indefinite but perfectly dreadful.

This last point is corroborated by the experience of another traveller — a Forest man called Carrow. He also was sleeping in a dark room when a squirrel or some such creature in the roof knocked out a tile, which came smashing down on the floor beside him. Carrow awoke full of the most dreadful sensations, and spent the rest of the night with a stable lantern burning in the room. Ever afterwards he was solemnly convinced that if the tile had not fallen and wakened him he would have gone on to some dreadful deed. He also said that when he lit the lamp the darkness that leapt away from him into the corners of the room seemed almost solid and alive, but this I take to be a justifiable imagination. Whatever it was that kept in God's Hill did not materialise even so much as that.

Quite of another type was the case of Captain Welsh. Welsh was coming up from the coast on a solitary shikar trip to the Samsuri Hills, and he made a half-way house at God's Hill. He dined prudently, and went out to smoke a cheroot on the verandah. The feeling began quite mildly with an unusual exhilaration at the prospect of his expedition, a conviction that the shikarri's was far and away the best mode of existence. It was a splendid thing to go out and kill. There was nothing like it. Then gradually this feeling developed itself into an overmastering desire to kill something then and there, and would brook no possibility of delay. In a weak moment he got out his rifle and went out into the compound, the feeling growing upon him every instant. It was a bright moonlight night, and in a corner near the outhouses he saw the dirty white form of a pi-dog nosing about some garbage. "I never fired so quick in my life," said Welsh afterwards. "Both barrels too. It was done before I knew I'd started. Can't think what made me do it." By all rights, if this were a proper story, the thing should turn out to be no pi-dog at all, but in the morning there it was sure enough—a lean, miserable creature, very much the worse for Welsh's two bullets. Welsh was a stranger to the district and knew nothing of the history of God's Hill, and he always referred to his experi-

ence as "a weird go of fever I had at some place in the south." Having shot the dog, he went in to bed, slept excellently, and subsequently had a very successful expedition.

But the question is—If that pi-dog had not providentially appeared, what would Welsh have gone on to do? There seems some ground to suppose that he might have done as Maple did, who got up in the middle of the night and shot his own horse in its stable at the hill foot; or as Payman, who ambushed himself behind the dining-room door while his boy was bringing the coffee and went for him murderously, as he entered, with a carving-knife and the leg of a chair.

There was again the case of Biswell of the Police, who rushed down at dead of night into the village of Barachi shouting impossible things, and had to be restrained by force after attempting half the offences in the Indian Penal Code—and some outside of it. They said Biswell was mad and took him away, but he was a perfectly sane man going home on the boat, as many can testify. And there was the case of young Gray—another policeman—who rose from his bed at 2 A.M., mounted his horse, tore through Barachi like a despatch rider and—vanished. This of all the incidents connected with God's Hill approximates most nearly to a manifestation of the supernatural. It would approximate still nearer were there not such an unholy number of big disused wells in the flat fields around Barachi.

Mostly, however, as I have said, the place struck down on one merely with a dreadful depression; picturesque incidents such as those of Payman and Biswell were rare. But a milder form of the thing which affected Mottram was almost universal—and terrible enough it was. Poisonous thoughts, amazing and unspeakable dreams, and above all depression—suicidal depression. And yet there were only two suicides in the place—which is a comparatively small bill for an Indian bungalow of any age. One was a man in the Salt Department. The Salt Department is prolific in suicides; there are reasons for this, but nothing is to be gained by recording these here. This was a man who was bound to have shot himself some day—so it was said. Perhaps God's Hill hastened it a little, perhaps not. The second was a young lieutenant who knew nothing about God's Hill at all, and went there on purpose to do it, so he cannot be counted. That is two; and there would have been a third—a real genuine God's Hill one this time—but for another coincidence. This time it was another Forest Officer—a perfectly healthy and cheerful young man with nothing on his mind to speak of. But God's Hill took hold of him, and he was actually in the middle of writing the customary letters when the District Superintendent of Police rushed into the bungalow at

two in the morning. He had ridden thirty miles and had meant to ride many more before daybreak, for there was sudden news of big trouble afoot among the Mattahs—the little, wizened, intractable aboriginals of the Samsuris. But his horse arrangements had broken down at Barachi, and in he came to snatch an hour's sleep at God's Hill. He made noise enough coming in to enable young Lea to cover up what he was doing; and at four in the morning they went on together and found the trouble almost died out. Whereat the D.S.P. cursed with vigour; Lea less heartily.

Now please note these coincidences. Mrs Mottram scented danger and got Mottram out of his toils; the tile came down and woke Carrow; the pi-dog appeared as a target for Welsh instead of something more precious; the Mattahs rose unexpectedly, Sinclair's horse arrangements were bungled, and Lea came out of the very valley of the shadow. There were others. Almost it looks as though there were something good that fought the evil of the place, and won about three times in four. In fact, if you think of the grimness of the power and the comparative poorness of the results, it seems that it must have been so.

Let us come then, in conclusion, to the mention of that terrible night when the Good and the Evil fought for God's Hill over the head of the Rev. Claud Bennington, and the Rev. Claud Bennington came through it and told the tale.

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III.

The Rev. Claud Bennington was a man and a gentleman, which cannot be said, unfortunately, of all in India who prefix "Reverend" to their names. He was a big man in many senses—a graduate of Oxford and an athlete of some distinction. He was what is commonly called "strong"—a shade too much so, perhaps, though that is not a bad quality in the East. Mrs Bennington was a very timid, rather pleasant little woman, who had come out with Bennington under the impression that all India was like Kipling's Simla—and as a consequence had been nearly terrified out of her wits. There was also at the time of this incident a Miss Jane Bennington, aged five, a lady of much character and charm.

As Government Chaplain, Bennington had a big range of country to get over. His headquarters lay on the coast, and most of his work ran up and down the seaboard tracks, but there were a number of biggish inland towns which had to be visited once in four Sundays or so. Among these was Bandha, where the sugar-works founded by Daniel Fernandez had thriven mightily,

so that Bandha had become a large city and a Divisional Headquarters withal. It is a long cry from Bandha down to the coast, and so Bennington usually broke his journey at a place called Messagiri, on the coast side of the Mohnds. But on this occasion of which we speak there fell a storm so dreadful that Bennington, travelling from Bandha with his wife and the child, found the passes of the Mohnds out of the question, and having got with difficulty as far as Barachi was forced to seek shelter in the unhallowed precincts of God's Hill.

As a matter of fact, no sensible person would ever have left Bandha, for from morning onwards it was a day full of warning — black and gloomy, with banks of piled-up cloud everywhere, and sharp gusts of tearing wind. The wise heads of Bandha prophesied a storm of more than usual violence—possibly a cyclone—and Bent, the Divisional Officer, whom the breath of scandal said was attracted by Mrs Bennington, implored them not to start. But Mrs Bennington was always in a state of nervous terror when out of headquarters, and Bennington was anxious to get her back to the coast as soon as possible. The carriage was therefore got ready, and away they went, the day meanwhile falling a shade darker, with rumblings of distant thunder, and those sharp gusts of wind settling down into a steady gathering blast from the south-west.

They got within about a mile of Barachi without mishap, but at this point the wind, which had been steadily increasing, ripped up a big tamarind tree at the roadside and fairly hurled it at their heads. The thing crashed away past them on the left, and the carriage slewed and groaned under the blast. Mrs Bennington began to cry. Bennington got out and tried to turn the carriage back towards Bandha, the only result being that the wind, now striking the vehicle broadside on, all but drove it into the ditch. Any move in that direction was obviously out of the question.

"My dear," said the Rev. Claud, "we shall have to put in at Barachi."

"Oh no," sobbed Mrs Bennington. "Not that dreadful place,—on a night like this, too."

"I'm afraid there's nothing else for it," said Bennington. "In fact, it'll be a mercy if we even get there."

That was a terrible two miles. The uprooting of the tamarind had been a mere preliminary, and now the wind came up round them in long howling sweeps, that seemed like to beat them out of their senses altogether. It was about three in the afternoon and almost pitch dark, the air full of flying sand, and the smell of wet earth that always comes before rain in India; and by the time they floundered into Barachi, Mrs Bennington was on the verge of insensibility. Jane, how-

ever—this is a very notable point — sat upon her father's knee and took a keen interest in the progress of events. But for the fact that the rocky base of God's Hill stood right between them and the wind, they could never have made the bungalow at all; but in the end it was done, and there they all were huddled in that very room where once Fernandez had dined, and where some time later the Hairy Trunk had stood against the wall.

"I'm afraid it's a cyclone," said Bennington. "But we must hope for the best. This place is built like a fort."

(In point of fact it was that cyclone known generally as the Big, and locally as M'Gillivray's, cyclone. M'Gillivray was an engineer who had just built the railway bridge on the lower Palamadhi. He swore that it would stand, and he sat on the middle of it all night to see. It stood, and M'Gillivray was a made man. But all this by the way.)

Bennington had been in the district seven years, and he knew God's Hill and all about it. Having a broad mind, he was not at all sure what he made of it. He saw no clear and sufficient reason why a particularly evil person should not affect the place he lived in in such a way that his influence survived in some form or another long after his earthly presence was gone; and he was never altogether sure how far, by believing in a devil, one could actually bring it into being. The people round Barachi had a magnificent retinue of devils in their calendar, and so far as God's Hill went, at least the more enlightened European had backed them splendidly. But he held it was a man's part to stand out against the terror of all such places, believing that a place so evil as some made it out to be would not be suffered to exist unbridled. Bennington knew all the stories about God's Hill intimately, and he set great store in his arguments on that string of coincidences we have mentioned — Mrs Mottram, Carrow's tile, Welsh's pi-dog. It was not for him nor for us to say how far he believed in a constant struggle between the Something Good and the Something Bad at God's Hill, —probably, I should say, about half. This is important in the light of future events.

An Indian cyclone is not a thing to be taken lightly. Bennington had still hopes that this one would draw off up the cup-shaped valley of the Palamadhi, as they sometimes had done, but at all events it was only commonsense to be prepared. He left Mrs Bennington and Jane in the big middle room after bolting and barring every door and shutter. The south-end room—which was nearest the wind—was the most vulnerable point, but Bennington closed all the shutters and barricaded the door — which unfortunately opened out through the south wall—with every available piece of furni-

ture in the bungalow. The roof was a matter best left to Providence. He had just finished the work when his ears caught the most heart-rending outcry from his daughter. He dashed back into the main room, and found the child screaming in a paroxysm of terror; Mrs Bennington was seated limply on the floor, weeping drearily.

"What's up, Lady Jane?" cried Bennington, tackling the more serious case first. "Don't you like this house?"

"Howwid," shrieked the child. "Howwid place."

Mrs Bennington looked up and said with an air of hopeless finality—

"We shall never see to-morrow, Claud."

Bennington, taken aback for an instant, was trying to think what to say, when suddenly and without warning the thing fell upon him too. His heart seemed to drop with one rush into fathomless depths of despair, a hideous gloom came down and took possession of him, he all but threw himself crying on the floor. As it was, he went into the other room, commended himself to such powers of good as might still remain in the place, mastered himself with a tremendous effort, and returned to the charge.

The storm came up slowly; at six in the evening, after three dreadful hours, it was little more violent than when they had first arrived. The Lady Jane had ceased to scream, but still cried on, defying consolation; Mrs Bennington wept without sound, but with heartrending bitterness. Bennington still held himself in hand, trying when he could spare a moment from the struggle with himself to comfort the others. It was the child's behaviour that frightened him; tears and Mrs Bennington were no strangers, but the Lady Jane was the soul of courage and had never been known to be afraid of anything. After the first hour Bennington got up and walked about the room, and the Thing that pursued him never left off for an instant. But presently there came and mingled with it an absolute conviction that, come what might, he must not leave that house. This was absolutely imperative, and the more he called it unreasonable the more insistent it grew.

At six-thirty — which was the exact camp hour — the servant entered after the manner of Indian servants and served the usual six-course dinner. The butler apologised for a suspicion of grittiness in the soup, on the ground that half the kitchen roof had been torn away and some dust had fallen down; later, he had to explain the non-appearance of the side-dish by announcing that the matey had been blown bodily over while carrying it across. Otherwise dinner was as usual. Mrs Bennington ate nothing, and sat staring in front of her; the Lady Jane condescended only to a little pudding, but Bennington ate all he could, for he felt he had a night before him.

After dinner he made a sudden resolution, and practically picking up both Mrs Bennington and the Lady Jane, he set forth with them to the village. He said afterwards that he knew it was a risk, but in the other case it seemed a certainty that if he left them there he would have neither wife nor child by morning. The wind sprang at him like a wild beast and tore and raged round him, and the lightning went blazing across the sky in great arrogant strides, but he got them down the narrow flight of steps, and after that it was a little easier. He left them with the butler in the village post office—which even then was almost the only building still intact, —and then with an inward prayer he turned back to God's Hill.

This was about nine o'clock, just at the hour when the iron chimney of the sugar factory at Bandha was torn bodily away, and smashed like a battering-ram through the overseer's quarters, butchering the inmates like sheep. A wave of that same frightful blast, the forerunner of the really disastrous part of the storm, caught Bennington at the foot of the rock steps and flung him against the side. A weaker man would have been knocked senseless, but Bennington stood it and went on up the steps on all-fours. He had an extraordinary feeling of exhilaration, of something that seemed to applaud his advance, and a mad conviction that to-night of all nights the Good and the Evil would fight it out, and that he must be there. As he went up the steps a huge stone came roaring past him like a cannon-ball, but he laughed at it and went on. At the top he tried to stand, but the wind threw him down on all-fours again: as he grovelled he saw by the lightning a fresh blast leap round the corner of the hill, and one of the outhouses flew upwards and outwards as though a shell had burst in the middle of it. A tall column that stood in the ruined part of the bungalow came spinning at him and fell round him with the thunder of a bursting wave; but he came through it, and presently he was in the house once more. He went round his defences carefully, and then planted a chair in the middle of the main room and sat down on it. He was quite cool, for he knew now that it was a battle, and he must fight for his life—or more.

The first hour was the worst. A thousand hideous thoughts attacked his mind, the depression came down on him again like a sea, and he had to hold himself forcibly in his chair. Had he once left it, he said, nothing could have stopped him from dashing out of the house and down the ghat of steps and away. Outside the noise was deafening; roar upon roar of thunder, and above all, the frightful diapason of the the wind, the crash and thunder of loosened earth falling down the hill. Inside now and then he could catch the groaning of the tortured rafters, the grind

of the masonry, the crackle of bursting woodwork. At moments it seemed as if something were going to happen. Meanwhile, calling on such help as he knew, he sat patiently on in Fernandez' dining-room.

Just after ten o'clock there came the beginning of the end. A more than usually urgent blast, with another at its heels, came flying round the corner of the hill, and the tiles on the south gable striped and flew like feathers. The rafters, standing out like black bones against the glare of the lightning, groaned and parted; the storm swept down into the room, and the window-shutters flew outwards one after another like a fusilade of small cannonry. Bennington, stirred to action at last, sprang up, and dragging in the furniture from his old barricade, made a fresh one inside the connecting door of his own room. He gave it twenty minutes at most, but for some unknown reason it stood for over an hour and a half. Midnight had gone before the whole world seemed to rise up in one great swelling roar, —the partition door burst inwards, and Bennington's barricade of furniture came tumbling in like surf on a beach. He himself was thrown against the wall, and made for the door just in time to see the lightning blazing over his head as the roof was lifted bodily away. As he got outside, the ill-fated partition-wall bulged and crashed inwards, and some other more distant part of the house fell like thunder. That was the tail-end blast of the whole hurricane: to its credit stand, on good authority, two churches, the Government buildings at Bandha, the railway bridge at Palnur, three rice-mills, and the bungalow on God's Hill.

With the crack of dawn came Bent, white as a sheet, groping his way upwards through the *débris* and the blinding rain. He had borrowed a zamindar's elephant, and come on the heels of the cyclone from Bandha—a Christian act which earned him the ill-natured gossip of at least seven clubs. He found Mrs Bennington and the Lady Jane safe and sound in the post office — which weathered the storm with *éclat*,—and perhaps it is as well Bennington was not there. It is no discredit to Bent that he made a fool of himself for a few minutes, but these things are better unwitnessed. He discovered Bennington sitting on a rock trying to smoke, and as was natural, they spoke about the bungalow and not of one another.

"That's a nice mess," said Bent.

"I don't think," replied Bennington, "that it's any great loss."

"Oh, I don't know," said Bent; "it was a good bungalow, and you can't build good bungalows for nothing."

But Bent had never stayed at God's Hill.

. . . . . .

IV.

That is the story of God's Hill. As said at the outset, it is not really a story at all; it leads to nothing, and it does not explain itself in any way. Never shall we know what it was that carried off Fernandez, or what besides that wholly inadequate infant abode in the Hairy Trunk, or what it was that hung about the place so long and so dreadfully. We shall never even know if these were one or three; nor if the Thing is even now gone, for now it is a place where no man has any call to go. The long outline of the foundations can still be traced if one takes the pains, but for all practical purposes three black columns and a fantastic fragment of wall are all that remain of Fernandez' terrible house.

But it is a sombre place still even to those—and they grow in number with the years—who know nothing of the past. In a dull evening of the rains, with clouds banking all around, or in the colourless glare of the hot weather, there is still something a little daunting in the black rock set crudely in the plains and the discoloured significant ruins on its shoulder. Around it are the menacing hills where the great beasts keep their lairs, and the thankless fields tilled by a weary people following strange and doleful gods. And if some one of the Benningtonian creed should say that the place had created its own devils—well, what then?

HILTON BROWN.

WÜRZBURG.

BY AN EXCHANGED OFFICER.

"Turbatus est a furore oculus meus ; inveteravi inter omnes inimicos meus."
—*Psalm* vi. 8.

On our arrival at Würzburg, before leaving the railway carriage, all the soldiers except myself were handed a slip of coloured paper marked "Hut Barrachen No. 14." A most unpleasant-looking person, who spoke a little English, and wore a very superior air, was in command of the stretcher-party that carried me across the station. I kept asking for my luggage, a hand-bag and a fragment of the German sausage! which had been left in the carriage, and was told it would follow later, and meantime was, like myself, safe in good German hands. However, my valuable belongings were eventually put on the stretcher beside me. While waiting on the platform my English-speaking attendant volunteered the information that there were already over 200 British officers in the place. This was lying for lying's sake, or perhaps it was a lie told to the wrong person, and should have been reserved for the citizens of Würzburg. The morning was a bitterly cold one, and the arrangements made for our transport from the station gave us the full benefit of the freezing north-easterly wind. The vehicle into which the stretchers were lifted does not deserve the name of ambulance, nor had it any pretension to the title, for it was not even honoured with a Red Cross. It was just a common lorry, such as is used in the district for carting wood, covered with a tarpaulin supported by a longitudinal bar on transverse stays. The tarpaulin, which had been rolled up on one side while the stretchers were being placed in position, was rolled down again. A German ambulance man jumped up behind and off we went. Each stretcher was provided with a blanket, which afforded some small protection from the cold blast which blew through the open end of the cart. None of the soldiers with whom I had travelled from France were in this cart, and at first I thought that all the occupants were Frenchmen. But the man next me was an Englishman, dressed in French uniform, who had been with me in hospital at Cambrai. His face was so drawn and haggard that I had some difficulty in recognising him. This poor fellow would not answer me at first, and then whispered that he did not want the German Red Cross attendant to know that he was an Englishman, and hoped to pass for a Frenchman as long as possible, so as to get

better treatment. The other Frenchmen lay silent and motionless, worn out with exhaustion and want of food. By slightly rising on my side, I could see following far behind us a long string of carts similar to our own. The wind, which was now chasing here and there some few fine drifting snow-flakes, had doubtless kept the streets clear of pedestrians, and there were few spectators of the dolorous procession. Some small boys fell in behind, and played at soldiers escorting a convoy, marching in step and singing in tune, only to be presently chased away by a watchful policeman. We crossed a stone bridge over the Main and almost immediately turned in, on our left, through the high wooden palisade which surrounded the hospital huts—our temporary destination.

The tarpaulin was quickly rolled up, and my four companions lifted down on their stretchers and taken away. My stretcher was lifted on to the ground, and remained there for five or ten minutes, close to a group of officers, one of whom appeared very annoyed at my having been brought to the wrong place; he presently came up and politely asked me my name and rank in very good English. This, I afterwards discovered, was Dr Zinch. He told me that I was to be sent up to the fortress. I was helped off the stretcher, and, owing to the cold, had great difficulty in hobbling along, and was very relieved to find that I was to drive up to the castle in a comfortable motor *coupé*, probably the one used by the doctor himself. A hospital orderly got up beside the driver, and a very tall sentry, who had great difficulty in getting in his rifle with the bayonet fixed, squeezed in beside me.

The Festung Marienberg, about a mile outside the city of Würzburg, is a place of great architectural and historic interest. Previous to the days of heavy artillery, the hill on which the fortress is built provided a naturally impregnable site, which had been used for defensive purposes from the earliest times of which any historic trace has been recorded. When St Kilian in the seventh century brought Christianity to Franconia from far Iona, he was at first very successful at the "Castellum Virtebuch," and converted the Frankish commander. A few years later a chapel was built within the walls, dedicated to the B.V., and the fortress became known as Festung Marienberg.

In the middle ages the castle was famous as a stronghold of the warrior bishops of Würzburg, and stood firm during the revolutionary periods which followed on the teachings of Huss and Luther, even when the surrounding country had been laid waste, and the town of Würzburg captured by a rebel army. Once after the peasant army had been betrayed, surrounded, and almost annihilated, the unfortunate survivors were taken away to the Festung Marienberg. "Thirty-six of them," says a

contemporary writer, "had their heads cut off, and the council and aldermen have been taken prisoners; God only knows what will be done with them." It was a common punishment in those days for a prisoner to have his eyes gouged out, or his fingers chopped off. At the present time these somewhat barbaric customs have been considerably modified, and although the Rittmeister who was in command of the fortress during my residence there did not resort to such extreme measures in dealing with his prisoners as had been found necessary in the sixteenth century by the Margrave of Brandenburg, he did his best, as I was soon to find out, to make us feel the burden of captivity.

As the motor began to climb a rather steep gradient, the silent sentry, with a wave of his hand, introduced me to the outer battlements of the Festung Marienberg. Between this outer wall and the castle moat, the long steep slope on the west side has been laid out as a garden with shrubs and well-grown trees. "There," said my sentry, "is where the officers can make their daily promenade." This I need hardly say was not to be our privilege. The second wall is of great thickness, so that the entrance is like a tunnel, the gradient of the road being so steep as to bring the car down to the first speed. We cross a courtyard with stables on the three sides, and then pass through a third doorway, and drive over the moat into the main court of the castle.

This inner court, of oblong shape, is some 60 to 70 yards long and about 30 broad.

On two sides were the soldiers' quarters, built in the middle of the eighteenth century. The ground floor on the left was used as a stable, and above the stable were the prisoners' rooms. A fifteenth-century chapel stands in the far corner on the site chosen by St Kilian. An aggressive watch-tower, dating from the eleventh century if not earlier, tall and massive, is the most interesting feature in the curious medley of architecture, which presents a graphic picture of the castle's history.

The motor drew up at the far end of the court. I was then helped out of the car and formally handed over to a German Non.-Com. named Poerringer, who had charge of the prisoners, collected their letters, &c., &c.,—in fact he was our "jailor."

We entered the fortress buildings through a small doorway in one of the old towers, and the broad spiral stairway proved almost too much for my powers of locomotion. However, with a helping arm under each shoulder, they got me along. Half-way up the stair we turned through a door on our right, which led into a large and very medieval-looking guard-room, a long, low room faintly lit up by narrow windows deeply set in immensely thick walls. In one of these window recesses was

a desk and chair barred off from the rest of the room with temporary wooden cross-bars. I was led into this cage, and told to sit down and wait to be interviewed by Mr Poerringer. My luggage was brought up and put down beside me, and a sentry took his position near at hand.

After a few minutes' rest I began to look around, and as my eyes got used to the dim light I saw my friend the French doctor sitting on a chair farther up the room within speaking distance. A thoughtless *Bon jour, Docteur*, raised the wrath of the sentry, who turned in my direction and grunted out a sentence which ended in *verboten*.

The guard-room then began to fill with soldiers; the loud tramping, the guttural words of command, the curious antique unmilitary-looking uniform, the crowd of squat, slouching, and for the most part bearded, round-bellied creatures, formed in the dim light a picture that might have belonged to a land of gnomes, wicked princes, and enchanted castles.

Such at least was my first impression. Our middle-aged sentries in broad daylight were anything but romanesque. Their uniform consisted of Hessian boots, civilian trousers, and dirty green jacket, and always a big black leather belt to keep in the rebellious stomach. They appeared most of them to be wood-cutters, charcoal-burners, workers in the beautiful forests of Franconia, who did not take kindly to the monotonous duty of guarding prisoners, and to a discipline little less strict than that of the prisoners themselves.

After the ceremony of changing the guard had been completed, and all arms had been examined to make sure they were loaded, Mr Poerringer, who was in undress uniform, and did not go about with a ridiculous bayonet, came back with some papers which had to be filled in, and by virtue of which my official status as a prisoner would be completed. My luggage was examined courteously and as a matter of form. I was asked if I had any fountain-pens, maps, or firearms! concealed in my belongings.

So far, conversation had been carried on in English, of which my "jailor" could speak but little.

Before leaving Cambrai I had forgotten to look up the most commonly used German word for "paralysed," and the friendly Highland sentry in the train, whose German was no doubt not of the best, had told me that the correct word was "gicht." I tried this word when explaining the cause of my lameness to Mr Poerringer, and was much astonished at the result. "Is that all that is the matter?" said he; "you will soon get cured here." Weary of trying to make myself understood, I protested somewhat impatiently in French that there was not much point in bringing a half-paralysed man into such a carefully-guarded prison. With a most

Parisian accent he replied: "Oh, vous êtes paralysé, moi qui croyait que vous aviez la goutte."

We now, of course, got on very much quicker with the filling-in of papers. One entry, headed "Request to Prison Governors," I wished to fill up with a request to be sent back to England, according to rules laid down in the Hague Convention. Mr Poerringer shook his head, and said there would be no exchanges until the war was over! My request for a room to myself, so that I could hope for sleep, was not passed, no such room being available, and the column was left a blank. In this first interview Mr Poerringer was trying hard, probably under orders, to put on a fierceness of manner which was obviously quite foreign to his nature. I subsequently found that in his dealing with the prisoners, both French and English, he always displayed a kindly courteousness which was strikingly in contrast with the behaviour of his superior officers.

Still escorted by a watchful sentry armed to the teeth, I was assisted up the broad spiral staircase to the door leading into the prisoners' quarters. Mr Poerringer pressed an electric bell, and yet another heavily-burdened warrior appeared who led us into a broad, stone-flagged, whitewashed corridor, well lit with large windows overlooking the courtyard, a cold inhospitable-looking place. A more welcome sight than any I had for a long time been accustomed to was that of two British officers hurrying forward to meet me, one of whom was I——, who had been with me in the Civil Hospital at Cambrai, and was much surprised to see me on my feet again. We all marched along to the room which had been allotted to me—the smallest of the five rooms which opened into the corridor, occupied by nine French officers, who were then seated at a long table enjoying their midday meal. My new-found British comrades introduced me to the senior officer, Colonel L——, who welcomed me with the greatest kindness, and offered me the best that could be supplied from their private store of food and drink, including a bottle of very excellent Bavarian beer, for which, after the exhaustion of the past few days, I felt most thankful. The room, which served as living and sleeping room for ten officers, was none too large. The furniture consisted of the large wooden dining-table, a small wooden table and chair for each officer, two washhand-stands, and two chests of drawers shared among the lot. We had, of course, no carpets, wall-paper, or curtains, and no facilities for getting hot water. Two windows looked out over the Main, between them a large and very efficient stove. I looked with apprehension at my "bed"—a wooden plank scarcely three feet broad, on iron trestles; at the "mattress"

—a coarse linen sack open on one side, and stuffed with straw, renewed, I was told, once a month. The two English officers, I—— and R——, with an English civilian, P——, lived in a large room adjoining ours, along with ten French officers. Other two large barrack-rooms were also occupied by French officers, the total number in the fortress at the time being between forty and fifty.

It was arranged that I should take my meals in the adjoining room, where the Englishmen had their three beds together in a corner known as "the English Club." On the day of my arrival the "Club" held a long sitting, which was attended by many of the French officers, eager to hear what news there might be from Cambrai. Time passed quickly that afternoon. I—— had much to tell me, and many questions to ask about friends at Cambrai, and Captain R—— and P—— gave me an outline of their misfortunes. R—— had been more unfortunate than any of us. He was travelling in Austria before the war broke out, and was arrested on his way home before war had actually been declared. Along with P—— and a number of British civilians, men and women, who were travelling in the same train, he was stopped at Aschaffenburg and taken first to the police station and then to prison. The whole party were locked up in separate cells to be searched; even children of eight to ten years were dragged screaming with terror from their mothers, and locked away by themselves. I do not remember many details of the story, but R—— and P—— told me that it was a very near thing for them both; they were suspected and vehemently accused of being spies, of which baseless charge there was, of course, not the faintest shred of evidence.

I was glad to learn that the austerity of our prison life was mitigated to some extent by permission to buy extras in the town. A list of "commissions" was made up weekly, and might include jam, honey, cream-cheese, dried fruits, articles of toilet, and beer. Every prisoner was entitled at this time to write one letter a day. A hot bath was to be had once a month! prisoners being taken down in batches under strong escort to public baths at Würzburg. The doctor came once a week to see all who needed attention — an occasional inspection, and a weekly visit from the hairdresser completed the list of important "events" in the deadly dull routine.

The food supplied by the authorities was, on the whole, of bad quality, badly cooked, and insufficient.

Breakfast at 7 A.M.—A roll of potato bread, and a cup of tea, coffee, or milk.

Lunch at 12.30—Soup, which varied from day to day in colour but not in taste, or rather lack of taste.

One dish of meat with cabbage and a potato. The meat was almost always "pork," disguised in

strange manner. Once a week we had "beef" very tough and quite uneatable. Probably horse-flesh.

Dinner—Cold pork and cabbage, sometimes varied by scrambled eggs and salad.

Lights out at 10.

II.

The English Club usually spent the interval between dinner and bed in a game of cards, but on this my first night I was too tired to make a fourth at bridge, and hobbled off to my own quarters under the severe gaze of three unfortunate sentries who had to spend most of the night marching up and down the cold clammy corridor.

On arriving at "Room 52" the noisest game of cards in the world, known as "La Manille," was in full swing, the air was thick with tobacco smoke, and empty bottles of beer stood in serried ranks on the table. Monsieur l'Abbé was playing with the Doctor against Colonel L—— and another officer whom I privately nicknamed "Granny." Granny's main ambition in life seemed to be to escape from fresh air, and even in the close atmosphere of tobacco smoke and fumes from the red-hot stove he was wearing all the underclothing he could put on, and round his neck a huge muffler.

The presence of M. l'Abbé in the uniform of a private soldier was the result of an appeal by the Pope to the German Emperor to allow priests serving in the French army the same privilege when taken prisoners as are accorded to officers.

I cannot describe Colonel L—— better than by saying that he represented the typical soldier of Napoleonic days. His career in Saharan and Moroccan campaigns had already proved him to be a leader of no ordinary merit. He possessed a great number of medals, which, as a prisoner, he did not wear, and had been wounded almost as many times as he had been decorated! It was impossible to get from him any account of his adventures in the present campaign, but I gathered from what his brother officers told me that he had behaved with extraordinary gallantry at Charleroi, and fell riddled with bullets when leading the last remnant of his regiment in a counter-attack to save the rest of the Brigade. He had been hit in the leg, his right arm, pierced by a bullet, was withered and useless, and three other bullet-holes in different parts of his body brought to fifteen the total number of wounds received during his military career. His wonderful cheerfulness was an example and a consolation to us all. I remember when we were all discussing how long the war would last,—this problem was always a subject of speculation and conversation,—Colonel L—— declared that no one should give any thought to

themselves, or worry about the probable length of their imprisonment. "I don't care," said he, "if we are here for seven years. J'ai confiance dans La France. La France triomphera et tout le reste m'est égal." The doctor was quite remarkably like the white rabbit in 'Alice in Wonderland,' plump, short, blonde, closely-cropped hair, a tiny moustache, an apologetic air, and an aggravating habit of continually saying, "Ah, pardon." At 10 o'clock M. L'Abbé, who was the last up, put out the lamps on the table. Candles were blown out one by one until the only light left was that of a single candle by the bedside of a young cavalry officer who spent most of his time reading in spite of the continual noise. To keep a candle alight after "lights out" was an offence which, in our room, met with instant punishment. "Rosteau, Rosteau!" some one shouted, and I never knew if this was a slang word of warning, but it was always followed, as in this instance, by a whizzing boot hurled at the offender's head. This was the signal for the despatch of projectiles of all kinds—tin boxes with a bit of coal inside hurled across the room and fell on or by the enemy with a deafening crash, hair-brushes, slippers, stale rolls of bread, were flying in the dark from one side of the room to the other. The performance was generally closed by Colonel L——, whose orders for silence were always instantly obeyed. To break the silence of the night was against the unwritten law, except for one purpose—to stop snoring. Here it was "Granny" that was the chief offender. In spite of the hardness of my bed, and the impossibility of turning round without falling out, I think that I might have got some sleep if it had not been for "Granny"—a most kindly, lovable man by day, but an aggressive, vulgar fellow at night, for whose blood I have often thirsted in the early hours of the morning. The usual method for stopping snoring was to whistle loudly. If this did not produce the desired effect, a clever shot with a boot was sure to be successful in rousing not only the snorer but the whole room.

Shortly after six o'clock the day began with the entry of our French orderly—we had one to each room—with the morning ration of bread on a large tray: two small rolls to each man. After the rolls had been distributed round the five rooms, the cups of coffee, tea, or milk were brought along in the same way. This was breakfast. I tried the coffee one morning, found the tea just as bad, and finally settled down to hot milk. Getting up was of necessity regulated by the fact that we only possessed two washhand-stands among ten people. With washing, dressing, and shaving, I generally managed to spin the time out to about 10 o'clock, at which hour I used to take up quarters in the "English Club" for the rest of the day. The room which my English comrades occupied possessed many

advantages over my own; it was far larger, and owing to the presence of a strong "fresh-air" party, the windows were kept open continually. In my room, where the stove was always at a white heat, fresh air was looked upon with disfavour; the windows were opened a few inches while the room was being dusted, or when tobacco smoke was too thick, and I, as a lover of fresh air, was in a minority of one. In "53" room the partisans of fresh air included not only the three Englishmen but the senior and more assertive of the French officers. In spite of the unanimity which reigned in room "53" on this debatable subject of windows open or windows shut, party strife was nevertheless very much in evidence, and centred chiefly round the question of noise. The room was divided into as many sections of opinion as the French Chamber of Deputies. Five officers hailing from or about Marseilles, who lived in a row at the far end of the room, represented the ultra Radicals. They declared for the unlimited freedom of man, and elected to make as much noise as suited them at all times of the day or night. O—— belonged to a party by himself. He was to sing and whistle whenever the spirit moved, but when he engaged in writing and reading, as fortunately was often the case, the rest of the world was not expected to interrupt. The English party, openly setting its face against noise of any kind at all times, was supported somewhat weakly by two or three adherents who were not strong-minded enough to accept the whole of our Party Policy, and were inclined to advise moderation in all things. Our political opponents — the Meridional ultra Radicals—were known as the Gollywog, the Calendar, the Owl, the Pup, and Consul! The Owl and the Calendar (so called because he only shaved on Sundays, and the day of the week could therefore be known from the colour of his chin) were comparatively silent partners to the conspiracy of noise, but the Gollywog, Consul, and Pup made up amply for their deficiencies. Their favourite occupation consisted of inane discussion shouted across the room. "Et autre *main* je dis que dans le service il faut tutoyer les hommes. J'ai trente-cinq ans et je sais ce que dis." "Et mon bon." This to the protesting Pup. "Vous n'avez pas le droit de parler, vous êtes jeune, vous sortez de l'œuf, vous sortez de l'œuf." This expression of contempt for the youth of the Pup was always the last word of the Gollywog, who would strut up and down the room shouting, "Maintenant vous n'avez rien à dire, vous sortez de l'œuf, vous sortez de l'œuf." Consul, so called chiefly on account of his agility and quickness of movement, famous also for an entirely original method of consuming bread and cheese, took part in noise along with the others of his party more often in chorus than in solo, but none of them except the Gollywog had any idea what a nuisance they were to the whole room.

III.

At 10.30, in answer to a great shouting of "Promenade, Promenade" from room to room, those who wished to "go for a walk in the garden" assembled together at the end of the corridor. The garden entrance was at the far end of the courtyard, and in spite of the moat and the triple lines of battlement, the promenading party always crossed the court under escort. It took me about five minutes to cross the yard. I—— and R—— always stayed behind to help me along. We were never allowed to start without an extra guard, sometimes two or three, but generally one soldier, rifle loaded and bayonet fixed. Our sentry must have felt, and certainly looked, extremely ridiculous escorting a cripple at the rate of seventy yards in five minutes. What we used to call the garden, Baedeker briefly refers to as follows: "Visitors are admitted to the terrace (view of town) on application to the sentry (fee)." The terrace extended about a hundred yards in length between the barrack buildings and the moat. The total breadth is not more than about fifteen feet. Most of the space is taken up with flowerless flower-beds, extending the whole length of the terrace, with a double row of vines. A narrow pathway about four feet broad was all the space available for exercise. Doubtless the view from the terrace is very fine, and perhaps worth a "fee to sentry," but we were very tired of it. On the right, across the valley at the highest point of the wooded hill, stands the Frankenwarte — a hideously ugly watch-tower; lower down, about half-way to the river, the "Kappelle," a pilgrimage chapel, looked after by religious, whom we could sometimes see walking about their garden, black dots on the far hillside. The Ludwigsbrücke crosses the Main far away below, and twice a week at the same hour we used to watch a regiment of infantry cross the bridge, and the strains of the "Wacht am Rhein" could faintly reach our ears when the wind was favourable. A group of factories form an ugly background to the whole picture, but we found in them a cause for rejoicing, the tall smokeless chimneys bearing witness to the stoppage of work and to the power of Britain's fleet. Three sentries were always on guard during our daily walk, one at each end of the garden and one in the middle, although the only means of exit was to drop down a precipice. The wall on the moat-side bore an interesting inscription to the memory of four French soldiers who had fallen at the spot when the castle was stormed in 1796. A number of cannon-balls, half embedded high up

[1] General Jourdan was surprised and heavily defeated at Amberg and Würzburg on the 24th August 1796 by Archduke Charles, brother of the Emperor of Austria.

in the masonry of the barrack buildings, testify to the inefficiency of artillery in the days when our great-grandfathers were at war. There was one feature about our terrace promenade which attracted more attention from the promenaders than the view over the town or the fresh air from the hills. I cannot give a fair picture of the Festung without referring to it and to some unpleasant details which the fastidious reader may like to skip. In the very centre of the terrace, hard up against the path, is a large cesspool covered over with two very badly fitting iron lids. The sanitary arrangements for the whole fortress—that is to say, prisoners and guard—are contained in a wooden shed, which stands in the centre of the courtyard just opposite the windows of our corridor. Alongside this shed is another cesspool, fortunately properly closed in. This cesspool is emptied once a week or once a fortnight into an *open cart*, which then proceeds to our garden to be emptied. This process goes on the whole morning. On this day it is impossible to keep the windows open in the corridor, and a visit to the terrace is, of course, out of the question. Even on the next day the air is most unpleasant, and if there is any rain the cesspool in the garden overflows, and the narrow path is turned into a stream of sewage.

As the castle clock strikes eleven, the terrace party are marched back across the courtyard by a strong guard, and I follow slowly in rear, with a sentry all to myself, dodging manure-heaps and tacking to avoid pools of dirty water and tracts of nameless mud, so that my snail-like progress causes no little worry to the attentive sentry. I spoke to the doctor one day of the absurdity of not allowing me to crawl across the yard without a soldier with bayonet fixed, but the doctor rather had the better of me, for, said he, "The sentry is not provided as an escort, but as a guard of honour!"

Opposite the old doorway entrance leading up to our cold corridor there is another door with a stair leading up to some rooms which are occupied by the permanent staff of the fortress, perhaps by the men who, in times of peace, collected fees from visitors to the castle. In the morning, on our way out, the window above the doorway was always filled with three smiling baby faces, and on a fine day two of the children always took their stand outside the door. Francie was the name of the eldest little girl. She was not more than eight years old; she wore a neat little blue frock; her hair was of beautiful fairness. She was a great friend of R——, and always answered his "Guten Morgen, Francie," with smiling shyness. The fat baby, not very clean, with tousled, flaxen curls, could only just walk, and held nervously on to his sister's little finger. Francie at first was very frightened at my appearance, hobbling along on crutches, and the poor little baby fell right over and began to howl right lustily. But

Francie soon got to know me nearly as well as R——, and her pretty smile was the brightest thing in the whole of Festung Marienberg.

The mid-day meal was at 12.30. Brown bread, ground-nut butter, and Gruyère cheese were extras that could be ordered at every meal; and the French orderly, when he came in to lay the table, was greeted with cries from all in the room, each officer shouting out for what he required. "20 pf. de beurre" brought a small pat of quite edible butter, 25 pf. was the price of a fairly large-sized helping of brown bread, and 10 phen. for a thin slice of cheese. Cheese and butter were expensive items, as by the time all the thumb-marks had been scraped off, the ration was much reduced in size. The soup was doled out in the kitchen which, I have forgotten to mention, was at the end of the corridor and the door guarded by a sentry. The loaded soup plates were brought in on a large tray carried by two orderlies. The plates were generally full to the brim, and the orderly would seize one plate in each hand, planting a large and very black thumb right into the swirling soup. Waves of soup then splashed on to the floor or disappeared up a dirty sleeve. I never ate soup while at Würzburg and even now seldom do so without thinking of the black thumb. The next and final course came in on the trays as before, and was served on oblong plates divided up into four square compartments, meat in one corner, potatoes in the second, and sauerkraut in the third, the fourth being left to eat out of. A knife and fork was provided for each officer, who had, however, to buy his own glass; and in our room, by very special favour, we had been allowed to buy a coloured cotton tablecloth. It was very seldom that any satisfaction could be got out of the meat course, which was almost always pork in some shape or form, and the mainstay of every repast was provided from our private stores of cream, cheese, honey, and brown bread. Supper was, as I have said, merely a slice of cold ham or a sausage and potatoes. The "Gehaltsabrechnung" for this not very luxurious fare was 31 m. 70 pf. per month. Officers of the rank of Lieut. were paid 60 m. a month, from which a deduction was made for board.

We were allowed to see two German papers — the 'Kölnische Zeitung' and the 'Local W. Anzeiger.' These papers arrived after lunch, and anything of interest was translated aloud for the benefit of the club by R——, who knew German thoroughly. The former showed a disposition to break forth into sensational headlines, and was rabidly and sometimes comically anti-English. On the occasion of the Heligoland fight, one paper announced in large print that the British battle-cruiser *Lion* had been sunk. In next day's paper we discovered, hidden away in a corner, the statement that the *Lion*, crippled beyond repair, had been towed into port, and that the *Blucher*, owing to an acci-

dent in the engine-room, had unfortunately sunk on her way back to harbour. News from the British front was not often given much space, and it was easy to guess that at the time there was nothing much doing in that direction. The news from Soissons was naturally made the most of, and was very disheartening reading.

I remember how amused we were at the account of a coal strike in Yorkshire. This, we were all convinced, was an ingenious German lie. Much as we used to long to see English newspapers, I am now thankful that we were not allowed to see them, and that my fellow-prisoners are still confined to sceptical reading of the 'K. Zeitung' and can enjoy undisturbed their own imaginary picture of Britain at war, which a knowledge of the truth would quickly dispel. The long dull days of life at the Festung Marienberg recall a memory of much yearning for news of England, of speculation as to the date of our liberation, and above all of an intense desire to witness some day the defeat and humiliation of our insolent enemy. But the misery of inactivity when so much is needed to be done, the monotony, the aimless futility of existence that is no longer useful, this is the real trial which makes imprisonment intolerable. There are few prisoners in the Festung Marienberg who would not joyfully exchange their lot for that of a Welsh miner, and work till they dropped for enough bread to keep body and soul together. The mental sufferings of those who are imprisoned in Germany is intensified by the fear that others who have not learnt the truth from bitter experience will not believe. We, in the fortress, knew the power of Germany, could feel it in every incident of our lives. We lived in the very midst of an organisation which moves as one for one purpose—the destruction of European civilisation and the substitution of Teutonic conceptions. The truth which years before had sounded incredible, when voiced by the authority of Lord Roberts, and had been dismissed by the majority of the nation as the senile vapourings of a decrepit Jingo, this truth was now as familiar to us in the Festung as the air we breathed.

What if the nation still fails to understand? If a message could come from our imprisoned countrymen in Germany, from our long-suffering allies in Belgium, whose integrity we guaranteed by a solemn promise which we made no arrangements to keep, from all who know by hard experience how Germany treats those whom she has conquered, such a message would declare that no sacrifice can be too great provided the military domination of Prussia is finally destroyed. Those who have felt the power of the enemy know also that if we are to be successful nothing less than the maximum effort is demanded. What this means Britain as yet does not begin to understand.

IV.

EXTRACTS FROM MY DIARY, EXPANDED AND EXPLAINED.

"*Sunday, Jan.* 10*th.*—Mass, 8.30. Snowed a little."

M. l'Abbé officiated. Very nearly all the French officers attended mass. From my room two were either too ill or too lazy, and Granny, who, in the early hours of the morning, was frightened of catching cold, did not appear outside the bedclothes. The officer who used to read at night, at whom boots were thrown every evening on the stroke of ten, declared himself to be a Pagan, and so he also remained in bed. The choir loft of the chapel had been set aside for the use of the prisoners, and thither we were escorted down a dark stair and long corridor by the usual armed sentries, one of whom remained with us in the church. The body of the church was filled with German soldiers. During Mass the organ was played and hymns were sung by the German part of the congregation. After Mass was Benediction, when it was our privilege to sing. Colonel L——, with a very powerful voice, acted as leader of the choir, the Frenchmen singing with great *entrain*, as if to let the enemy know they were not downhearted. On this Sunday M. l'Abbé preached a short sermon on the gospel of the day, but this privilege, no doubt displeasing to the lower part of the congregation, was afterwards withdrawn, and on the following Sundays we had to endure a discourse from a German priest.

"*Monday, Jan.* 11*th.*—Snow. A sentry committed suicide last night in the corridor. Great excitement among the Germans."

It was very early on Monday morning, long before daylight, that a noise of running feet outside the door of our room showed that something abnormal had happened.

Colonel L—— ordered every one to stay in their beds, and we speculated vainly as to the cause of the uproar until the orderly came in with "Breakfast." A sentry had shot himself through the head. and was lying where he had fallen at the far end of the corridor, guarded himself now, poor fellow, by a brother sentry. No one was allowed out of his room until the corpse had been removed, which was not done until several officials had inspected the remains. When the inquest was over, and the corridor cleaned up, a stain on the stone floor and a bullet-hole in the wall remained to tell the tragic story. Snow was falling that afternoon, and there was no chance of getting out to the terrace, so that the rest of the day had to be devoted to Poker and Bridge, games of which all were heartily sick. Reading was difficult on account of

the ceaseless noise kept up by Gollywog and his merry men. Our game of Bridge was played at the end of the dining-table, the other end being occupied by chess, of which the Gollywog and Consul were the chief exponents. In the hands of these experts chess became the noisiest of all parlour games. They played on the co-operative system, two players sitting at the board, the others standing up at each side of the table. No piece was moved without great discussion, conducted in a loud voice, with much gesture. As soon as a piece had been moved the chess-board became a sort of storm-centre into which even non-players seated at the far end of the room would recklessly plunge.

As a result of one of these discussions two of our southern friends quarrelled in real earnest, and most dramatically vowed to fight a duel at the conclusion of the war. R—— suggested it was a pity to put off the encounter indefinitely, and meantime proposed the use of coal buckets at fifteen paces. Strangely enough this real quarrel brought peace to the room for a few minutes, but the parties soon made friends again and the noise went on with renewed vigour. At seven o'clock the table was cleared and laid for dinner.

Dinner as usual, cabbage and cold sausage, the latter somewhat more palatable when fried on the stove to black crusty cinders.

"*Tuesday, Jan.* 12*th.*—Doctor's visit. I asked to be exchanged. There seems to be some hope."

This first meeting with the doctor was to me a cause of much apprehension. In the event of an exchange of prisoners it was in this man's hands that the final decision would lie as to what prisoners were unfit for military service.

Shortly after 11 A.M. a French officer told me that the doctor was visiting my room. The corridor was very cold that morning, and, partly from the cold, partly from nervousness, my entry into the room where the doctor was waiting was most impressive. For the moment I lost control of my limbs, and nearly collapsed into the doctor's arms.

Dr Zinch is a small fair-haired man, about thirty years of age. He speaks English with fluency, having lived for some years in New York. He had visited Scotland and stayed, he said, at Skibo with Andrew Carnegie. When no other German officer was present his speech and manner with me was always polite, sometimes verging on kindness. Whilst I was resting on a chair he made an examination of my head, and read the certificate which Dr D—— had given me at Cambrai. This document, I was glad to see, seemed to create a favourable impression. He then asked me to try and walk with one stick only. In attempting to do this, which at times I was well able to

do, my right leg, fortunately, refused to move forward. The doctor took down some notes in his book and seemed to have quite made up his mind as to the hopelessness of my condition. In answer to my inquiry, "There will be no exchange of officers," he said, "and you will never get any better." The latter part of this not very cheering remark was fairly satisfactory, as it meant that if ever there was to be an exchange, my name would be on the list. The hardships at the Festung which I felt most keenly were the hard straw bed and the impossibility of getting the hot baths which at Cambrai had afforded me so much relief. The doctor offered to give me some morphia pills; but these I refused to take, and asked to be given a proper mattress, or to be allowed to buy one. On a subsequent visit he informed me that this could not be permitted, adding that he "dared not do too much for the English." Such, to the best of my remembrance, were the very words he used, seeming genuinely ashamed at having to refuse such a request.

When Dr Zinch paid me his next visit, he was accompanied by the Rittmeister Niebuhr, the officer in command of the fortress. It would be an unwarrantable insult to the German army to say that the Rittmeister was a typical German officer. Medium height, sparely built, sallow complexion, dark hair and moustache, with his burlesque swagger and affectation of dignity and authority, he was such a caricature of a German officer as may be seen in a comic illustrated paper. Hatred of the English and a bullying manner appeared to be his chief qualifications as Fortress Commander. A safe occupation this to worry defenceless prisoners, and one more suited, perhaps, to his capabilities and inclination than a soldier's work at the Front. My first introduction to this unpleasant individual was when the doctor brought him to see me in answer to my request for hot baths. I was lying in the "English room" on the corner bed, known as the Club Sofa. I struggled up into a sitting position, and saluted the visitors to the best of my ability. The Rittmeister did not deign to take the slightest notice. Dr Zinch explained that I had asked for hot baths three times a week, and requested permission to hire a carriage down to the public baths. The Rittmeister, with an insolence of manner worthy of Hudson Lowe, told the doctor to say to "Dem Mann" that the monthly bath, graciously allowed to officers, according to the wise German regulations posted up in every room, for the purpose of personal cleanliness, quite sufficient was. During the whole conversation I was continually referred to as "Der Mann," which, according to German etiquette, is, from one officer to another, the height of insolence.

Once a month eight officers at a time were allowed down to the public baths in the town. Those who could walk were escorted down by half a dozen guards, and the walk must have been a welcome relief from the monotony of the fortress. Later on, after I left, R—— got leave to be taken down to the dentist, and wrote to say how delightful it was to be seated for a short time in an arm-chair. It is not often that a dentist's chair is looked upon with such favour. Those who could not walk down to the town were driven in a sort of prison van; most of the invalids were from my room —Colonel L., Granny, and three officers, who were still very lame, one of whom has since been exchanged. I——, who was not quite up to walking, and myself, very nearly filled up the van. After we had got in there was not much room for the two sentries, who, like most of their kind, needed a lot of accommodation. It was, however, quite impossible to get the rifles in with the bayonets fixed. After one or two attempts, and after sticking the point of their bayonets nearly through the roof of the van, they finally gave it up, unfixed bayonets, and sat holding them in their hands. The windows of our carriage were of frosted glass, barred right along inside and out, so that we could see nothing of the town as we went along. A quarter of an hour's drive brought us to our destination. The van turned into a large covered yard, in one corner of which was a large motor waggon and a pile of worn-out knapsacks, boots, and military kit of various nature. From this yard a flight of stone steps led down into a basement where some men were making packing-cases. A long corridor led to the bathing establishment, which was very clean and tidy. The accommodation was, however, limited, four baths and four shower-baths. I—— very kindly helped me in and out of my bath and assisted me to dress, the sentries meantime keeping a sharp look-out outside my door. When we had finished, the old woman in charge of the establishment came round with Mr Poerringer, who had driven down on the box-seat, and collected a mark from each of us. As I was ready dressed before the rest of the party had quite finished, I made a start down the corridor, so as not to keep everybody waiting. This was at once noticed by one of the sentries, who zealously followed behind me; whereupon I reduced my speed to the slowest possible crawl.

On our return journey one of the party produced a flask of what is known in the fortress, and perhaps elsewhere, as "Quetch," a very fiery, sweet-tasting, white liqueur. We all took a nip, and I ventured to offer some to our melancholy guardians. To attempt such familiarity was, of course, a serious breach of regulations, and they shook

their heads regretfully. They were a most amusing-looking pair, sitting very squeezed up, opposite each other, in the corners nearest the door, each gripping firmly to his bayonet, both of them short and round and solemn, like Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

"*Jan.* 15*th.*—Inspection."—A general inspection of the fortress was carried out every two or three months. The inspection on this day—the only one which took place while I was a prisoner—resulted in my getting into trouble with the inspecting officer, who, as I had been warned by my fellow-prisoners, would be on the look-out for any pretext to punish the English. I was sitting at the dining-table in the "English room," with my back to the door, when the inspecting party came suddenly in. I could not turn round to see, and did not know who the noisy visitors were until I saw that every one in the room was standing to attention. I slowly rose from my chair and, leaning both hands on the table, managed to keep a fairly good balance, which I nearly lost in taking my pipe out of my mouth. When the group, which consisted of the Inspecting Colonel, the Rittmeister, and Mr Poerringer, came opposite to where I was standing, they stopped and looked at me. "Who is that fellow?" said the Colonel. "What is he doing here? He is surely not an officer. He is not standing at attention, and has only just deigned to remove a pipe from his mouth. Has he been wounded?" "No," promptly responded the Rittmeister, but Mr Poerringer stepped forward and corrected him. They then passed round the room and went out without further observation. Five minutes later Mr Poerringer came in and said that the Colonel wished to speak to me in the corridor.

Outside the door was the inspecting officer — large, not very tall, somewhat red in the face, no doubt a pleasant enough man after his second bottle of wine. I leant against the wall and saluted by lowering my head on one side and endeavouring in vain to raise the right arm to meet it. Mr Poerringer and the Rittmeister stood frozen to attention, whilst the Colonel delivered a long statement to the former in order that he might translate it for my benefit. I was being severely reprimanded. Apparently the meanest soldier in the German army was a better-mannered man than I was. Of course, bad manners was only what might be expected of a British officer. If I did not know how to behave, they would soon teach me, &c., &c., &c. Every word of this tirade, most of which I understood, was then repeated in French by Mr Poerringer, and his translation was certainly milder than the original. The Rittmeister stood by with an evil grin. When they had all finished, I told Mr Poerringer that I was physically incapable of showing such outward signs of respect as were due the in-

specting officer, and that my failure to show him honour was not due to any desire to be discourteous. My "explanation" really seemed to me—unable as I was even to stand without crutches—almost an insult to such common-sense as a German officer might be supposed to possess. My court-martial of three then withdrew further up the corridor, consulted together, and sent Mr Poerringer to me to say that "in view of what I had said, the Colonel had very kindly agreed to overlook my offence, and therefore I would be let off the punishment of cells."

"*Jan.* 16*th.* — Hairdresser. The Rittmeister calls again." Once a week came a gold-spectacled, middle-aged hairdresser, accompanied always by a sentry with the ever-loaded rifle and the everlastingly fixed bayonet, who stood behind the chair in which the officers took turns for a shave and hair-cut.

In the afternoon we had another call from the Rittmeister, whose visit this time was the most exciting incident which took place during my stay at the Fortress, and was for a long time the subject of animated discussion in all the rooms. The whole affair really began and ended with Gollywog. Mr P. came in about four o'clock and said that the Rittmeister wished to speak to Lt. C——. Gollywog went out into the corridor, remained absent for fully five minutes, and came back with the Rittmeister, who advanced into the middle of the room and ordered "All English officers to leave the room." This was most interesting, and the four of us went out into the corridor greatly wondering what new game was being played. After about a quarter of an hour the Rittmeister came out and went off down the corridor, whereupon we hastened back to hear what had happened. The Rittmeister had made a most genial and polite speech. He had heard that the English officers had not been behaving properly, that they were quarrelsome, disagreeable men, and so on, for a good few minutes, ending up with a request that the French officers would kindly come to him if they had any complaint to make, however small, concerning the conduct of the English, who would then promptly be put in cells. "Bobjohn," a Lt. de Reserve, who knew German very well, replied briefly on behalf of the French officers — that they were all, English and French, brothers-in-arms and firm friends. The Rittmeister then went off in a very bad temper, disappointed that his clumsy plot to get the English into trouble had been a total failure. We were all indeed more amused at, than angry with, the Rittmeister's impertinence, but many of the French officers thought that Gollywog's part in the affair was open to suspicion; in fact, he was suspected of having complained to Mr Poerringer. I think it, however, more likely that the sentries, who were always spying and try-

ing to see what was going on in the room, had something to do with it. Next morning I happened to meet O—— in the corridor and immediately started swearing at him in a loud voice. He grasped the idea at once, and I could see the nearest sentry watching us narrowly. Sham fights between the French and English were started at intervals during the day with the door left wide open, so that the sentry could get a full view. In my room great annoyance was expressed at the whole affair, and Colonel L—— declared that the Gollywog's conduct was open to very grave suspicion. As a matter of fact, hardly any of the French officers were on speaking terms with the Gollywog, and so this rather unpleasant incident did not make any difference to his relations with his fellow-prisoners.

V.

"Send me a post-card when you have time," writes a friend from Germany; "letters and post-cards are the only things we live for." And so it was at the Festung Marienberg. Two or three times a week Mr Poerringer would come in with a bundle of letters and call out the names of the lucky ones, the officers all crowding round with eager faces, listening, waiting, hoping. Two officers only sat apart and watched, not without envy. One, a Frenchman from Lille, could never hope to hear from his wife or family, as communication with invaded territory is not permitted.

The day after my arrival at W. I wrote three letters, —one letter home, one to X.Y.Z., one to the American Ambassador in Berlin. At that time there was no restriction as to number, although later not more than one letter a week was allowed. I could not hope for news from home till the end of February, as six weeks was generally the time which elapsed before an answer came from England. I—— told me that on arriving at Würzburg he had written informing the American Embassy at Berlin of his position, and that in reply the Ambassador expressed a wish for information concerning the whereabouts of British officers. I therefore wrote to the Embassy stating the fact of my arrival at Würzburg, explaining the nature of my wounds, enclosing a copy of the certificate from Dr D—— also,—and this was the part I feared might not pass the Censor,—asking the Ambassador to put my case before the German authorities at Berlin.

By the same post I wrote to X.Y.Z., whose letter to Captain S—— had so providentially fallen into my hands at Cambrai. In this letter I gave a list—in answer to her inquiry—of all officers and men of whom any information had reached me at Cambrai. I also drew a pathetic picture of my own situation,

enclosing a copy of the much copied medical certificate, and begging X.Y.Z. to use influence on my behalf.

While at Cambrai and Würzburg two questions were constantly in my mind — first, Would there be an exchange of officers? second, If there was to be an exchange, how was I to make sure that my case would not be forgotten?

Pope Benedict XV., although I knew it not, was working hard to obtain a satisfactory reply to the first question. The happy solution of the second must depend on my two letters to Berlin and on the wide circulation of my medical certificate.

This certificate was a most alarming piece of evidence as to my condition, and I am glad to say that the event has so far proved the medical diagnosis to be a pessimistic one.

Medical men have told me that in nine cases out of ten such injury as is mentioned in this certificate results in the inconvenient habit of a spasmodic falling on to the floor, attended with foaming at the mouth and other unpleasant symptoms, all of which are included under the mysterious title "Jacksonian epilepsis." On account of this medical certificate, which more than hinted at the probability of my acquiring such unpleasant accomplishments, I was known to my friends in the fortress as "Jackson."

My two letters had been sent off on the 10th of January. Mr Poerringer very kindly gave me this information, he himself being the Censor. On the 26th January my first letter arrived, the first letter since my leaving England six months ago. It was from the American Embassy. Reading my name and address on the envelope, I began to feel a "person" again. The world outside the fortress was more real to me from that moment than it had been for many months. The letter dated 21st January acknowledged receipt of my communication of 9th January, and regretted to inform me "that the question of exchange had not yet become an actual fact, and that the exact provision whereby exchanges, when actually effected, will be governed have not yet been determined. . . . As regards the approximate date in the future at which the exchange of wounded prisoners will take place, the Embassy regrets to be unable to give you information. Negotiations are on the way, but no definite agreement has yet been reached." During that afternoon my letter was a subject of much argument. Never did I dare allow myself to read into these sentences any hope of freedom. It is better for a prisoner to live with no prospect of release than to hope vainly and be disappointed. So the letter was put away and kept out of mind as far as was possible.

A few days afterwards I happened to meet Mr P. in the corridor. He bade me good morning with even more than his usual kindness, and produced a letter. This was from X.Y.Z., and reading this letter over now, it seems

hard to believe that when I read it in the fortress, I dared not find in it any hope or any reasonable ground for hope. "I will certainly do my very best," says the letter, "to get you included among those for exchange. I gave your medical report to the American Consul, . . . and he has promised to go into the whole matter thoroughly with the authorities. The matter of exchange will take some time to arrange, I believe, so don't be too disappointed if you don't hear something at once." Here, at any rate, was the definite statement that there was to be an exchange, yet, it was still a struggle in my own mind between hope and fear, that dared not hope, and fear was still the conqueror. Mr Poerringer came into our room with some papers very shortly afterwards, and I asked him if it would be any use asking for an interview with the officer commanding at Würzburg. Mr P.'s reply roused the whole room to attention: "Vous allez probablement aller en Angleterre." Nothing more would he say, except that a letter had arrived about me from the War Minister. All my friends crowded round to discuss whether any credence might be placed in Mr P.'s information, and the verdict was that it would not be safe to take him at his word. Little belief existed among my fellow-prisoners, even after Mr P.'s statement, of the possibility of any exchange taking place. The odds laid during my first week at the Fortress against my being exchanged were 20 to 1. That evening, in spite of all the favourable signs, odds of 10 to 1 against were offered and taken.

VI.

Life in the Festung was becoming very hard. Snow had fallen heavily. For several days, owing to alternate frost and snow, the courtyard, whether a mass of slippery ice or of penetrating melting snow, was now a barrier to the garden across which I dared not venture. The corridor was so intensely cold that it was no place for me to take exercise in. My only relief at this time from lying on a bed was to take a few turns up and down the room during the hour of the promenade, when all windows were wide open. Every inch of the picture as seen from those windows is familiar to me. Far away, beyond the low vine-covered hills, now deep in snow, the spruce woods stand out pitch-black on the all-white horizon. More distinct than usual in the snow were the quaintly-shaped roofs of ancient houses and the numerous steeples and church towers for which Würzburg is celebrated in guide-books. Traffic on the river had ceased, for the big, broad barges were ice-bound, and only in the centre of the stream the yellow water ran freely, hustling along great lumps of ice and melting snow. Over the bridge ran the

electric tram lines that connect the town with the large suburbs on our side of the river, and the cold air—it was now freezing very hard — carried with distinctness the clanging, whining sound of the passing trams.

Wooden huts, surrounded with a high paling, lay right below, but the distance was just too great to enable us to see if they were inhabited by French or English prisoners. Away beyond the huts were large stone and brick barracks, from where on Sundays a band was wont to come forth and march close up to the fortress —a real German band this, they played extremely badly.

During the time of the hard frost a field close by the barracks had been flooded and turned into a skating-rink, where all day long the skaters, black dots in the distance, circled round on the white board.

The steep avenue leading down from the fortress through the wooded slope was at this time an object of interest. A number of small boys were enjoying themselves tobogganing down the rough uneven surface, running races, upsetting and rolling down the slope head over heels in the snow, with cries of joy and laughter. Some forty feet below the window, along the parapet of the inner battlement, two sentries stamping out a path on the snow looked up from time to time with suspicion at the figure leaning out of the prison window. Night was falling. The two sentries were impatiently waiting to be relieved. At last the relieving party appeared, escorted by a corporal; with due ceremony the guard was changed and the new sentries began their dreary tramp with rifle slung over their shoulders, beating hands and stamping feet against the ever-increasing cold.

Large electric arc-lamps had recently been fixed outside the windows, so that a strong light was thrown on the parapet and wall below, and the sentry could see to shoot any one, utterly foolish, who should attempt to climb down from our window to the parapet —a place, even when safely reached, from which there was no possibility of further escape. Electric light is used most lavishly by the town of Würzburg, and the effect of the twinkling lights of the city, seen from the fortress, is very beautiful, but one must be in the right mood to appreciate such things.

"Shut the window, Jackson, and let's have a game of poker." This was the voice of "Bob-john"—the best of friends. I have said too little of these friends of mine—both French and English—too little of their kindness, patience, and unselfishness with one who was often irritable and unreasonable.

"28*th*. Zeppelin. A great rush for the windows."—I did not realise before how tremendously big these Zeppelins are. It was a grand sight to see the grey-white ship, big as an Atlantic liner, sailing over the river, and to see it turn and come straight towards the castle on a level with our win-

dows. When only some few hundred yards away, so near that we could see the features of the men in the passenger car, the ship turned again and circled round the fortress, and from the windows of the corridor we watched it disappearing into the sunlight over the distant hills.

This evening was marked by the arrival of a parcel of books, Tauchnitz edition, which we had been allowed to order. No doubt the publishers are glad of the chance to unload their stock of British authors, as, after the war is over, there will not be much demand for the Tauchnitz volumes.

Early in February another guest arrived at the fortress—another member for the English Club. This was F——, from L'Hôpital Nôtre Dame Cambrai, who had made a very good recovery from severe wounds. Our new comrade, still very weak, only able to walk a short distance, arrived late in the afternoon, and was allotted a bed in my room. His experiences on the journey from Cambrai were very similar to mine. Although I have little direct evidence of how the Germans treat our soldiers, the information which F—— gave me on the subject is conclusive.

F——, before coming up to the fortress, was put by mistake and left for nearly an hour in a soldier's lager on the outskirts of W., and his story confirmed what the French orderlies had told us about the ill-treatment of the English soldiers.

"The English soldiers," said F——, "go about like whipped dogs." Most of them were ill from want of food and warm clothing. Any excuse was seized upon to inflict harsh punishments, and the constant bullying which was permitted, if not actually ordered by the officers in charge, made the men's life a perpetual torment. F—— had no time to get many details from the men, as the Germans hastily removed him from their company as soon as they found out he was an officer.

On the field of battle no danger could silence the cheerful jest of these brave men; in hospital no suffering had been able to damp their cheery courage. The picture of these same soldiers cringing, looking from left to right when spoken to, as if to avoid a blow, is one upon which I cannot allow my thoughts to dwell.

"*Feb.* 11*th.* — Nothing to record." This is the last entry in my diary. The doctor came again with the Rittmeister, and spent a long time by the bedside of Lieut. C——, who had been shot through the sciatic nerve, and was apparently permanently lame. They left the room without taking any notice of me. This was depressing.

It was understood that C——'s case for exchange was being considered. Dr Zinch had taken no notice of me on this occasion, probably because my case had already been decided; but this view did not occur to me at the time. A rumour had been going round the

rooms that an exchange of French officers, but not of English, would shortly take place.

The afternoon, my last in the fortress, passed slowly and sadly, like so many others. Poker had long ago been abandoned. Bridge was played with small enthusiasm.

A visit to the big room near the end of the corridor helped to pass away the evening. Here Captain D——, owner of some big mills in the north of France, showed me a working model loom which he had made out of firewood with no other tools than a penknife. With the loom he was weaving a "carpet" the size of a small pocket-handkerchief.

Feb. 12*th.*—*Der Tag.*—At 9 A.M. I was shaving at the toilet-table in the window recess when Doctor Zinch came into the room alone, which was unusual. He walked over to where I was sitting, and the following was our brief but exciting conversation—

"You are happy now."

"Why should I be happy this morning," said I, "more than any other morning?"

"But don't you know? You are going back to England."

Then for one brief moment I believed! but yet tried to keep from showing my joy, lest perhaps the news were false.

The doctor walked up and down the room in silence, then turned to me with a worried look. "Don't say anything about what I have told you. You and C—— are going away, but I should not have told you. I did not know you had not been told." And then he left the room.

Some one announced that the van in which we used to go down to the baths had arrived in the yard, presumably to take me away. On going into the corridor to see this welcome sight I met R—— and I—— hurrying to hear the news, which, of course, had at once been spread throughout the Fortress. We were standing in the corridor talking, when Dr Zinch ran up. "*Nix, nix*," he said, with his Bavarian accent, "there will be no exchange with England, on account of the submarine blockade. A telegram has come from Berlin. You are not going away."

Hope and despair now fought confusedly; where was the truth? Colonel L—— comforted me with his assurance that the doctor's last statement was a lie; that Dr Z. had become frightened lest the Rittmeister would be angry at my having been told the good news too soon.

Certainly the van was still in the yard, the horses had been unyoked. There might be hope after all. I went as usual to room "53," lay down on the corner bed—the Club sofa—for the last time! took up the book I had been reading the day before, found my place—the last chapter of 'David Copperfield.'

I had reached and nearly finished the last page, when the door was flung open and

the Rittmeister entered in the well-known manner, suddenly, and with a quick look round the room, as if hoping to catch somebody up to mischief.

As soon as he came into the room I knew instinctively what he had come for: while trying to get off the bed to salute I heard the much-longed-for word "Austausch." "You must leave at once," he said—"at once."

R. helped me off the bed and down the corridor, to say good-bye to my friends and get my luggage.

Mr Poerringer and the Rittmeister followed behind, the latter, as R—— remarked, eyeing me narrowly. I took longer than usual in this last walk down the corridor.

The Rittmeister followed into the room, went over to C——, and told him he was to leave next morning, then walked round the table past the bed where I was sitting, and left the room without further sign or word. I said good-bye to Colonel L—— and my new friends, and as it was midday Mr Poerringer suggested that I should stop for a few minutes in room "53" to get some lunch.

The meat course on that day was a dish of tripe which few of us could face, and while I was eating my bread and cheese R—— made up a parcel of bread and leberwurst for me to take along.

Mr Poerringer stood by the window watching, orders having been given that I was not to be left alone.

When Mr Poerringer remarked casually that the train left in half an hour, and that if I missed it there would be no other, I did not wait to finish the bread and cheese.

R—— put the parcel of food into one pocket of my great-coat, a small bottle of beer in the other, and I bade adieu to my friends, feeling quite ashamed of and yet unable to hide the joy of my going.

R—— for the last time helped me down the stairs and into the van. Mr Poerringer got in beside me.

I said good-bye to R——, and for a moment felt miserable at leaving so kind a friend to endless days of a misery from which I was now free.

As the van moved off he waved his hand with a cheery smile, and then turned away up the spiral staircase.

Mr Poerringer sat silent in a corner of the carriage (the same vehicle in which we had gone down to the baths). We crossed the courtyard, passed the entrance to the terrace, the sentries guarding the bridge over the moat. We entered the tunnelled archway, went slowly down the steep hill, and drove through the last barrier. These things I could see, for the window was opened.

My thought was still struggling with the realisation of what these things meant, and of what lay beyond these prison walls, when, as we drove into the main road, Mr Poerringer broke the silence, and there was a tinge of envy in his voice, "La guerre est fini pour vous," he said, "La guerre est fini pour vous."

A CITY OF THE PLAIN.

In the piping days of peace there were three conventional ways to reach Bagdad. You came *viâ* India, from Karachi to the head of the Persian Gulf, changed on to a river-steamer at Basra, and so up the Tigris to Bagdad: this was humdrum but "de luxe." Or, if the rigours of desert travelling were to your liking, you landed at a Syrian port, took train to Aleppo or Damascus, and trekked the five hundred odd miles to Bagdad along the banks of the Euphrates or through the heart of the Syrian desert. The third and last route was from Mosul in the north, whence the adventurous traveller floated down the Tigris on a *kelek* of inflated goat-skins, risking the possibility of punctures *en route* from playful Arab bullets.

When we approached Bagdad in the spring of last year, however, it was by none of these recognised routes. We came from the West, from the Persian frontier, and our road lay across the Mesopotamian plain. On the morning of April 15 we started with a small caravan of fifteen mules and an escort of four Indian *sowars* from the little frontier town of Mendeli. The weather had been "set fair" for some weeks past, and a few white clouds hovering over the horizon looked unfamiliar. By ten o'clock they had grown bigger aud blacker, and we saw that we were in for one of the fierce thunderstorms which sweep along the edge of the plain at this season of the year. There was not a scrap of shelter from the tearing wind, so we ate our tiffin as best we could behind a screen formed by a blanket rigged up against a couple of lances stuck in the ground, and then rode on through the pouring rain. We had dried in our saddles when, after eight hours' riding across the naked brown plain, we saw ahead of us the welcome dark patch which betokens an oasis-village. But there's "many a slip" for the traveller in these pathless regions, and, just as we were congratulating ourselves on reaching the end of the day's march, we came to the brink of a muddy lake, a mile or more wide, cutting us off from the village and stretching indefinitely in either direction. The flood apparently covered the desert for miles around, so we chanced our luck and rode into it girth-deep. By Allah's favour the caravan struggled safely through, with the exception of one mule, who lost his footing and collapsed into three feet of water and mud amidst the wreckage of our kitchen.

The village we had come to was Balad Ruz, one of the most charming I have ever seen. As we rode through next morning, in the freshness of dawn, it looked so pretty as to seem almost unreal. The path wound alongside a willow-shaded stream—the innocent-looking

author of our kitchen's ruin. High mud walls ran on either side, and on them and the water the young sunlight fell in splashes of gold. One bent one's head in riding along to avoid great scarlet sprays of pomegranate which surged over the walls from the gardens on the other side, and through the cracks of loose-hung timber doors caught glimpses of the charms beyond — masses of orange-blossom and foliage of every shade of green from fig to mulberry, with palms rearing their serene heads high above all. It was as tantalising as the enchanted garden in "Sylvie and Bruno." As we came nearer to the village itself, monumental piles of dry sticks crowned the walls, from the top of which sleepy storks gazed disapprovingly down at us, one here and there laying his head flat along his back and clacking his beak like castanets in protest against such early rising. This trick, by the way, has earned for them a quaint name among the Arabs, "Hajji Lak-Lak," *hajji* being the title given to a pilgrim back from Mecca, whither the storks are supposed to disappear at their annual migration.

An hour later we had left this corner of paradise far behind, and were once more swallowed up by the vast empty plain. That evening brought us to Bakuba, a large village on the Diala, which is an important tributary of the Tigris. We rode through a long, covered bazaar, very gay with stacks of oranges and piles of bright-coloured stuffs in the booths on each side, and on over a crazy pontoon-bridge to our camping-ground on the farther bank.

The next day saw us posting the remaining thirty miles into Bagdad in a four-horse landau —the local form of post-chaise. We drove along the Bagdad-Kermanshah road, but the ill-defined track of wheel and hoof-marks over which we jolted and swayed was hard to recognise as the chief trade-route between Turkey and Persia, and one of the greatest pilgrim-roads of Asia. Along it flock the many thousands of devout Shias who make pilgrimage to Kerbela and Nejf, the *mesheds* or "places of martyrdom" of the Caliph Âli and of his son Hussein, as holy in the eyes of the Shias as Mecca itself. They lie on the farther side of Bagdad, not far from the ruins of Babylon. There are other places of pilgrimage at Bagdad itself, including the tombs of two of the later *Imams*.

Bumping along this execrable road, worn by the feet of the faithful, we met and passed pilgrims of every degree. First would come some rich man's train. He is doing the pilgrimage "en grand seigneur," with a team of pack-mules and *kajâvehs* for himself and family. These are a sort of closed pannier slung one on either side of a horse: they rock atrociously, and the occupant, who squats on the floor, must experience all the sensations of a cross-Channel journey. A muffled twittering issues from one as it passes,

betraying the *harîm* within; another, with the curtains thrown back, accommodates the solemn and bulky figure of the great man himself. Next come humbler folk on foot with donkeys to carry their belongings, and last of all the poorest pilgrims who cannot even afford this luxury but carry their little all in bundles on their backs. One old man we stopped and asked where he came from. He was a tired-looking ancient and could only hobble with the help of a stick, but he cheerfully answered the name of a small town on the farther side of Teheran! Poor old fellow, he must have been weeks on the road, and he was quite alone; but we left him contentedly munching a morsel of stale bread and garlic, which our driver in a fit of generosity had spared out of the remains of his breakfast.

It struck me, as I watched them pass, what a loss to Christendom it must have been when the old pilgrimage habit died out. Your Moslem *hajji* loads up a donkey, sets off from home and tramps for months across whole countries, or even continents (I have read a book of travel in Central Africa whose author came across a party of pilgrims somewhere near Lake Chad on their way to Mecca). On his way he falls in with other *hajjis* of a dozen different races, all making for the same goal and united by a common bond of fellowship. He reaches the sacred shrine, performs the established rites, and returns home with a stock of yarns to last a lifetime, and a comfortable feeling inside that he has booked his seat in Paradise. Think what an experience it would be for a British labourer or artisan!

When we were still two hours' distant from Bagdad the mirage ahead began slowly, fantastically, to resolve itself into a vision of domes and minarets. It was a strange ethereal city which gradually took shape before our eyes, for the haze obscured the lower half of each building, leaving the upper portion floating in the sky. Presently, farther to the north, a broadening dark streak betrayed the course of the Tigris with its double belt of palms. Then two points of light beyond began to flash in the sun, which we knew for the Imams' tombs at Kazimein, with their domes plated with solid gold. It was surely such a vision as the Dreamer on Patmos must have seen when he described the jewelled city of the Apocalypse.

But the vision was fleeting, and disillusion followed close at heel. The dream-city soon became a solid thing of brick and mortar, and the nearer we came to it, the less ideal it appeared. Bagdad is *par excellence* a river-town. She owes everything to the Tigris, and honourably repays the debt by reserving all her charms for the river-front. To the desert she turns her back, and a remarkably ugly, sordid back it is. Entering thus, so to speak, by the back door, our first impressions were anything but favourable. The carriage

drove in through the *débris* of the old town-walls, threaded its way between a wilderness of pariah-haunted cemeteries and dust-heaps, relieved by a solitary fine old tiled minaret derelict amidst the surrounding waste, and plunged into a region of featureless back streets. From these depressing scenes we emerged presently into the main street, and ended our journey a minute later at the gates of the British Residency.

Bagdad boasts the proud title of *Dar-el-Khalifeh*, the Home of the Caliphate, or—as we know it better—the "City of the Caliphs." But six and a half centuries have passed since the last Caliph of Bagdad disappeared before the sweeping onslaught of Hulagu Khan and his Mongol hordes, and Stamboul has been now for nearly four hundred years the "Holy See" of Islam. Nothing, in reality, remains to Bagdad but the bare name alone, and a sad disappointment awaits the traveller who arrives at the place primed with memories of the Arabian Nights, and expecting to find himself wandering among its scenes. Floods, fires, and destroying armies have obliterated almost the last trace of the splendid city of Mansur and Haroun-el-Rashid, and the wisest thing for him to do, unless he is a rabid archæologist, is to take Bagdad for what it is to-day—an interesting, picturesque Turkish town, with a phenomenally mixed population, many romantic links with the past, and a potentially brilliant future before it.

The first feature of Bagdad that struck me was the colossal impudence of its swallows. The house was full of them; they were building nests in every available corner, and at dinner-time they flew in circles round the table. When I went to my bathroom on the first morning I found a young pair setting up house, so I drove them out and closed the shutters. On coming back to my bedroom, I found them hard at work there, and again I expelled them. They merely transferred their energies to my sitting-room, which apartment having four windows and two doors, I realised that further action was hopeless, and resigned myself, like the other inhabitants of the place, to a policy of contemptuous indifference.

All good travellers to Bagdad go first to see the bridge-of-boats, so thither we dutifully set out on the morning after our arrival. But there had been an exceptionally heavy spate on the river a few days before, the water rising nearly twenty feet in as many hours, and the bridge was swung back along either bank out of harm's way. The scene on the river, however, was inspiring. A steam-tug with loaded *sefinehs* lashed on either side came tearing downstream at a good fifteen miles an hour: ugly iron lighters, which had been towed up

from Basra full of rails and boilers for the Bagdad railway, were discharging their cargo on to the western bank with a fiendish clatter and din; and dozens of *gufas*, the characteristic small craft of Bagdad, were plying across the river. The *gufa* is the most archaic type of boat in the world. It is simply a big round basket of wickerwork — the largest holding twenty passengers or more— "pitched within and without with pitch," like Noah's Ark; its antiquity is answered for by the reliefs still visible on the walls of Nebuchadnezzar's palace at Babylon. It spins helplessly round and round in the stream, apparently unaffected by the efforts of the rowers with their paddles, and you can visualise it exactly if your childhood memories are fresh enough to recall the picture of the "Three Wise Men of Gotham who went to sea in a Tub."

The bridge being in normal times about as crowded as London Bridge at noon, the dislocation of traffic caused by the flood was considerable, and the *gufas* were doing a roaring trade. A small fleet of them lay in a basin near the bridge-head. Each passenger as he arrived at the landing-steps bundled into the nearest, and when there was not space left for a mouse the *gufa* cast off. It was towed some hundred yards up-stream by a man with a rope walking along a ledge built out for the purpose from the river-walls of the houses lining the bank, and then launched on its voyage towards the farther bank, which it reached, after strenuous efforts by the rowers, at a point a quarter of a mile or so down-stream. Occasionally a merchant turned up, followed by a string of porters with bales of merchandise. Then an extra large *gufa* would be requisitioned, the bales piled inside till they formed a pyramid eight or nine feet high, their owner would scramble up and perch himself perilously a-top, the rowers squeeze into any crannies they could find below, and the whole marvellous erection sail off.

Parallel to the river and extending through half the length of the town run the bazaars, connected by short cross streets with the river-side wharves. They are roofed in almost from end to end, in parts with a high-pitched timber roof and in parts with what the Turks call "Aleppo" vaulting, a series of traverse arches with the spaces between filled by small brick domes. Through apertures piercing the roof at regular intervals the sun streams into the dark interior, and forms shafts of light all awhirl with a grey-blue haze of cigarette smoke, producing an effect of vistas of bright columns against a dim background which is altogether delightful. Two features which I always welcome in an Eastern bazaar were, however, conspicuously absent—the all-pervading smell of saffron, and the rhythmic thúd-click-click-thúd of the spice-grinder's pestle and mortar. But there was compensation for the loss in the brightness of the colour-scheme.

There is a glad note in the architecture which is lacking in the more austere styles of Cairo and Stamboul — the result, no doubt, of Persian influence. The gateways leading to mosques are often covered with green, blue, and white tiles, with here and there a splash of red, set in minute and intricate designs. Dainty little archways surprise you at odd corners, and now and then you catch a glimpse of a tile-clad minaret or dome encircled with a broad frieze of graceful kufic script. At one place in the main bazaar there is a saint's tomb hidden behind a delicately painted façade of pink roses. The roses are all worn away at the level of a woman's lips; I suppose the saint has some special blessing to bestow on his fair devotees.

Bagdad must have as heterogeneous a population as any city of its size in the world, and in a walk through its bazaars you meet types of a score of different races. Predominant, of course, are the native Arabs. They retain, even in the degeneracy of town life, the dress of the desert—the long brown cloak and, for headdress, the *kuffiyeh* held in place by a halo-shaped *agal* of twisted camel's hair. But the former is rarely now the tasselled red-and-yellow silk handkerchief of old days, but usually a piece of cheap and ugly "Manchester goods," hardly distinguishable from a housemaid's duster. Then there are the Persians, merchants for the most part, fat placid gentlemen of the type you see portrayed in old Persian miniatures. They have a certain air of unctuous dignity as they sit in their narrow booths tight-packed among their wares and toying with the beads of an amber rosary.

A chance sign-board above some humble shop catches your eye: the name is one that figures high in the roll of titled plutocracy nearer home. A successful race these descendants of the Children of the Captivity, who still haunt the banks of the "Waters of Babylon," but send their offshoots to control the financial destinies of Europe!

Presently you meet a string of sturdy ruffians padding along at a jog-trot with Atlantean burdens on their backs. Dressed in short kilts, with red handkerchiefs twisted round their heads, and murderous-looking knives stuck in their belts, they look like a gang of stage-pirates. These formidable fellows are Kurdish *shayyâls* or porters, superb specimens of humanity, with a development of shoulder and leg worthy of a Rodin statue. They were the first of their race I saw, and did not at all accord with my preconceived idea of what a Kurd should be. Instead of the dark brutal faces with which my fancy had endowed them, many of them had blue eyes, fair hair, and refined features, often startlingly Anglo-Saxon in type, and a remarkable contrast to the expressionless oriental faces of the crowd around.

There is a large native Christian element, lineal descendants, some of them, of

the ancient Chaldeans, and adherents now of one or other of the many churches which flourish so abundantly on the soil of Mesopotamia: Catholics, Jacobites, Syrians, Greeks, and Nestorians. Besides the ruling Turks, chiefly Government officials, there are Armenians and representatives of I know not how many more races, including a considerable body of Indians, either merchants settled in trade or pilgrims to the famous Sunni shrine of Abd'ul Kader.

The mention of these last recalls a rather interesting fact connected with the duties of the British Consul-General at Bagdad. It seems that in the old days the Honourable East India Company once found themselves badly in need of cash. The King of Oudh, hearing of this, offered to lend them a few scores *lakhs* of rupees, but on a special condition—namely, that the capital sum was never to be repaid, but that the Company should undertake to administer the interest in perpetuity for the benefit of certain religious charities mentioned in his will. These terms the Company accepted, and they and their successor, the Government of India, have loyally fulfilled them ever since. Several thousands of pounds annually were bequeathed in the royal testament to the deserving poor at Kerbela and Nejf, and this sum the British Consul-General has to distribute. Twice a year he makes the arduous journey to the shrines, where he presides at the sittings of Relief Committees, and takes such steps as he can to limit the proportion of the money which adheres to the palms of the local *mujtehids*. Returning from this errand while we were guests in his house, he told how he had been importuned by an impecunious Indian who wanted a job as a clerk. Inquiries as to the applicant's identity and antecedents disclosed the fact that he was the great-grandson of the last King of Delhi. *Sic transit* . . .!

One day we paid the usual formal visit to the Vali. He was a fine-looking old soldier, one of the few Turkish generals who came through the Balkan war with credit. His talk was of schemes for the development of his *vilayet*, an airy project to establish a motor-bus service across the desert from Aleppo and the more concrete irrigation scheme which Sir William Wilcocks had worked out on the spot some years before. Ever since the days of that great reformer Midhat Pasha, Bagdad has been blessed with "progressive" Valis; but progress, as conceived by the Ottoman mind, sometimes leads to queer results. This was the case under a recent Vali. The main street of the town was, as it still is, extraordinarily narrow, and his Excellency had the commendable idea of having it widened. His method was simple. A straight line was drawn to mark the new limits of the street, and whatever projected beyond that line was shorn off till it reached it. The consequence was a row of

what looked like open dolls' houses with the whole of their internal economy displayed to the public view. An admirable system of ventilation was, I believe, the only compensation that the unfortunate owners got.

We had been told by Javid Pasha that a review of troops was to be held on the following day to celebrate the anniversary of the Sultan's accession, so we duly went out to the race-course behind the town to witness the spectacle. There were very few troops available, and rather pathetic efforts had been made to fill up numbers with cadets, boys from the industrial school, and suchlike, the "make-weights" even including a cart carrying a crate of carrier-pigeons (which our Christian dragoman maliciously suggested had been bought in the bazaars that morning). The mark of the hoof appeared even in this remote corner of the Empire when the infantry, on nearing the saluting-base, broke into a most laughable goose-step! After a march-past of the troops an amusing scene took place. The guilds of Arab craftsmen had been ordered to parade with the rest. They duly collected around their respective banners, and Turkish officers arrived to range them into line. But the craftsmen, having no love for the Turk and little respect for the Vali, had their own programme, and began to work up for a war-dance. It started by some one intoning a monotonous, ever-repeated chant. One by one the others picked it up, gradually increasing the time and marking the cadence by leaping into the air on each leg alternately, waving meanwhile whatever weapons they had in their hands above their heads. Before long the chanting had merged into one deafening roar, and there was a raging mob of lunatics brandishing knives, rifles, and sticks seething round each of the banners. A group began to sway backward and forward, then without warning, leaderless and as if possessed by an irresistible common impulse, broke away and came surging wildly across the ropes right into the middle of the spectators. It was a really alarming sight, and had one not been accustomed to the innocent eccentricities of an Arab war-dance (in peace time) it would have needed some nerve to save one from taking to one's heels in flight. The efforts of the Turkish officers to control their charges and bring them back into line were pitiful, and the whole scene resembled what I should think a Cumberland sheep-dog competition might look like with exceptionally wild sheep and quite untrained collies. For a moment the entire yelling mass would come dashing forward in the most promising style, when suddenly and for no perceptible reason it would abruptly right-about-turn and go rushing back again. At last, by pure good luck, I fancy, the collie-officers got them all heading straight for the Vali, and in one wild rush they went past the saluting-point. One

hoped his Excellency felt gratified.

I have mentioned the distant glimpse we had, on nearing Bagdad, of the golden domes of Kazimein. Here at least was something which smacked of the Arabian Nights, and I was full of curiosity to get a nearer view. But the tombs of the Imams are so zealously guarded by the fanatical Shias who live round the shrine that an infidel may not even approach within sight of the gates. Only by strategy could one get close enough to see, so when I was invited by old Mirza Daoud to take tea at his house at Kazimein, I accepted with alacrity. Mirza Daoud was the confidential servant of an Indian political officer who was one of our party, and an old Persian of great character. He had travelled far and wide with his master, and, like the traditional British tar, had "a wife in every port." The fairest of them dwelt at Kazimein, and now, after an absence of five years, he had returned for a week of connubial bliss, and incidentally—as he naïvely explained—to investigate a little matter of several sums of money which he had remitted to her for repairs, but which the fair lady, it seemed, had appropriated for her personal adornment, leaving the house to go to rack and ruin.

On the appointed day I set out for Kazimein. The first half of the journey was by motor-boat up the river past delightful old houses and gardens, wharves and warehouses, *serais* and mosques, whose blue-and-white minarets leaned like the tower of Pisa, coffee-shops built far out above the water to catch the breeze, and creeks between, where high-pooped *sefinehs* with prodigious out-rigged rudders and tillers as large as a fair-sized tree discharged their cargoes of cotton or brushwood. A prehistoric horse-tram took me the rest of the way and put me down in the filthiest and most closely-packed Eastern town I ever had the misfortune to visit.

My host's house I found to be a quaint little place built round a courtyard barely big enough to contain the solitary palm-tree which grew in it. A flight of stairs—about which the less said the better—led up to the guest-room, arranged with an open arcade along the whole of one side to allow the cool breeze to blow in from the north. After absorbing several cups of sweet Persian tea out of a cup which adjured one to "Love the Giver" (a fine testimony to the penetration of British trade!), and listening to the old fellow's yarns of his adventures with his Captain Sahib in the wilds of Luristan, I proposed an excursion to see the domes. Mirza Daoud had a friend who kept a caravanserai in the neighbourhood of the tomb, so to him we went and asked permission to go up on to his roof. The friend proved complaisant, and after one moment of awful suspense, when, having deprived me, as a measure of precaution, of my *ferenghi* hat, he appeared to be on the point of clapping his own turban on my defenceless

pate, we were allowed to climb up. There, a couple of hundred yards away, we saw the famous domes, flanked by their attendant minarets glowing in the light of the setting sun. At that distance the surface was not easily distinguishable without the aid of glasses, which it would have been rash to use in such an exposed position, but it seemed to me that the whole of either dome and the upper quarter or so of each minaret were plated with scales of the precious metal laid on like tiles. The effect, I must confess, made more appeal to the imagination than to the eye, and my sordid Western mind was rather engaged in a sordid speculation as to the value of the gold than in any attempt to judge of its artistic effect. What the figure may be I have no notion, but it must be something colossal.

As we threaded our way home through the narrow streets I asked my companion who the author of such munificence had been; he told me it was some ancient king of Persia who had made *ziaret* to the tomb. Just then we passed the city gates through which trickled a thin stream of pilgrims. Here they were, after weeks or months of tramping, arriving—as it were—at the very gates of Rome, and I scanned their faces for some trace of the emotions which a man might show at such a crisis; but none of the religious fervour that moved the old Shah to his lavish deed was visible in them, no flash of eye or quickening of step, nothing in their bearing but a tired indifference.

One last impression of Bagdad remains firmly fixed in my memory. We were watching the sunset from the terrace of the Residency on the evening of our departure. A pearly blue haze hung down-stream, broken only by the yellow mass of a big Turkish palace built on the bank a little farther down. Up-stream the contrast was extraordinary. An arch of liquid orange light curved above the horizon, its zenith directly above the river. Tawny reflections fell on the river's surface, and battling with the shadows among the ripples, turned it all into a silken glory of shot blue and gold. Palms on the banks and the masts of ships stood up in sharp relief against the sunset, as hard as the landscapes in bronze on Ghilberti's doors at Florence. There was hardly a movement or a sound to break the peace. Suddenly a German tug came round the bend, loaded with iron rails for the "Berlin-Bagdad" railway, forged up the reach, steered for the opposite bank, and a moment later shattered the air with the desecrating clatter and roar of her anchor-chains. How clear an omen, had we but known it!

That night we drove out of Bagdad on the Khanikin mail, a decrepit *diligence* drawn by four mules, and started on our weary 100-mile journey back to the frontier.

G. E. H.

A FAMOUS TSAR.

BY CHARLES WHIBLEY.

SOME men there are whom destiny casts for a romantic part upon the grand stage of life, whether they will it or not. Though all the impulses of their hearts drive them to retired thought and tranquil speculation, they are forced not only into great situations but into conflict with great men. Alexander Paulovitch, for instance, known to history as Alexander I. of Russia, was well fitted by temperament and character to be a political philosopher or an amiable philanthropist; it was his fate to dominate for a while the councils of Europe, to confront and ultimately to foil Napoleon himself, and rising to the height of his opportunity with a strength which not even his friends suspected in him, to break the last desperate attempt that was made until last year at universal sovereignty.

The grandson and favourite of the great Catherine, he was but a boy when the savagery of the French Revolution burst upon Europe. By a natural reaction he eagerly caught up the opinions of the foolish enthusiasts, who made the streets of Paris run with blood. He became curious concerning the sins of monarchs and the rights of men. A mild liberalism filled his heart and brain. He was seized with a grave desire to do good, a desire which would have found little sympathy at Court, had he dared to reveal there his hopes and purposes. The only begetter of these vague aspirations, of these brave, unpractical ideals, was M. de la Harpe, whom the Empress Catherine, persuaded by her love of intelligence and her interest in the Encyclopædists, had procured him for tutor. Now M. de la Harpe, who had been a member of the *directoire helvétique*, was one of the many prigs who had fed their fancies upon the illusions of the dying eighteenth century, who devoutly believed that the crooked world might be set straight by phrases, and who saw in his own doctrine a new philosopher's stone, a universal remedy which should explain all and cure all. He was not the best kind of instructor that could be found for a young prince, and it was consonant with Catherine's intellectual cynicism that she should have chosen him. Doubtless she thought that no man of her house, least of all her loved and elect successor, could possibly take any harm from the teaching of a philosopher. She did not understand the quick receptive mobility of Alexander's mind; she did not appreciate the constancy of his temper, which bade him never withhold a friendship he once had given.

For some years Alexander kept his hopes and fears locked within his own breast. It was not until he encountered Prince Adam Czartoryski that he discovered a companion to whom he might intrust his secret thoughts. Nor could he have found a wiser, better counsellor than Czartoryski, whose loyalty equalled his candour, whose allegiance never weakened, despite the sufferings of Poland, and who loved Alexander too well ever to deceive him. The decisive conversation took place at the Palace of the Tauris in 1796. The Polish Prince regretted always that he could not remember the exact date of an interview which profoundly influenced his own life and the destinies of his country. What he did remember was the precise terms of the confidence which was made to him in Alexander's English garden. The Grand Duke freely confessed that he did not share the ideas or the doctrines of the Cabinet and the Court, that he was far from approving either the policy or the conduct of his grandmother, that all his wishes were for Poland and her glorious struggle, that he deplored her fall, that Kosciuszko was a great man in his eyes both for his virtues and for the cause which he defended, which was the cause of humanity and justice. It is easy to imagine the enthusiasm which these warm words excited in the patriotic breast of Czartoryski, who believed that Russia and the rest of Europe existed for no other purpose than to right the wrongs of Poland. And Alexander was as yet but on the threshold of confession. He admitted that he hated despotism wherever it was found and in whatever manner it was practised, that he loved liberty, the equal rights of all men, that he took the liveliest interest in the French Revolution, though he did not approve its enormities, and that he wished the happiest success to the French Republic. These were pretty views for an autocrat to hold! And Alexander held them, as views merely, until the end of his life. We may imagine that he did not hold them very strongly or obstinately. The gift of persistence was never his. His liberalism was a wayward, moving influence, like many other of his dreams and fancies. Moreover, it was necessarily superficial. It was not held deep in his soul by knowledge or experience. Adam Czartoryski admits that his friend, in spite of his political zeal, had never read a serious book unto the end. Nevertheless he was a willing pupil of the French Revolutionaries; he echoed with at least a passing sincerity the solemn words of the amiable M. de la Harpe.

Czartoryski, young and enthusiastic as his master, marvelled greatly at what he heard. That these words should be spoken by a prince of Russia, the successor of Catherine, the well-loved grandson and pupil, whom, discarding her own son, she wished to reign after her, was a wonder indeed! And though the talk in the garden,

though the many walks to the villages about Tsarskoé-Sélo, had no direct result, though Alexander fortunately did not on account of de la Harpe's benighted reasoning give Russia a constitution or demolish his own throne, he won for himself a lifelong friend, whom no disappointment could estrange, and no political difference could turn from the habit of plain speaking.

Meanwhile, though in one part of his brain he kept neatly docketed a fine set of liberal opinions and a sympathetic interest in revolution, in another he cherished the proper pomposity of princes. He was greatly subject to what Czartoryski calls "paradomania." He delighted in reviews and official spectacles, in the details of uniforms, in all the manifold trappings of a soldier's profession. So busily indeed was he engaged with his duties in the army that he had no leisure for study, and cultivated politics only in talk with half a dozen intimates who remained with him as an inner and informal council, even after he had ascended the throne, and the foremost of whom was always Czartoryski. The death of Catherine and the accession of his father Paul left him still free to pursue that liberal policy, which in other countries besides Russia has seemed the privilege of an heir to the throne. And then suddenly there came upon him the tragedy of death, with which his house was already familiar, and which compelled him to lay aside the vague hopes of his boyhood, to face with what courage he might the crisis of his fate.

In 1801 the Emperor Paul was brutally murdered by a mob of conspirators, who went insolently beyond their instructions. That the safety of Russia demanded the abdication of Paul was evident. Catherine, in her foresight, had wished the immediate succession of Alexander, who himself had approved and shared the plan to remove the Emperor Paul from the throne. But Alexander had not envisaged for a moment the possibility of murder. He had devised for his father, in his own mind, a retirement of splendour and luxury. And when Nicholas Zubov found him expecting, in disquietude and doubt, the news of an abdication, and announced in his raucous voice that "all was over," Alexander fell into the very depth of sorrow and despair. Like a Hamlet, dimly conscious that he was not guiltless of his father's blood, he was paralysed to inaction. He knew not how to discover the actual murderers, or how to deal with them if he found them. He let "I dare not wait upon I would," and like all vacillators incurred the blame of both sides. These reproached him for disloyalty to the men who had placed him on the throne. Those charged him with a cynical inactivity of revenge. The truth is, he followed the right, and middle, course. On the one hand, he could not make a scandal and

punish the offenders by the public processes of the law; on the other he could not tolerate near the throne the murderers of his father. So, holding in horror all those whose persuasion had made him a party even to the plot of abdication, he sent them off to the Caucasus or some other outpost of the Empire, where they died of the bleak climate or of disappointed ambition.

Never was there a more melancholy coronation than Alexander's. Shaken by remorse, he passed through the ceremonies of Moscow like one in a tortured dream. He spent hours in silence, with fixed and haggard eyes. His friends feared for his reason, and had Czartoryski not been there to recall him to the proper discharge of his duties, he might have sunk into a state of leaden despair. Nor even did the conflict of Napoleon, and the great drama in which he played an eminent part, wholly save him from self-chastisement. He relapsed when the strain was relaxed into the moody mysticism, the disgust of life, which confused and darkened his last years.

It may be doubted whether he would ever have put into practice the liberal ideas of his youth had leisure and peace been given to him. The common experience of history proves that a philosophic heir to the throne accepts lightly enough the burden of autocracy. At any rate, the times in which Alexander lived were not favourable to speculation or reform. Destiny forced upon him the duty, for which his wayward temper, shot with manifold changes of mood and fancy, did not wholly fit him, of facing an implacable invader. When it would have pleased him to devise a new constitution or to establish Poland as a free and independent kingdom, he was asked to liberate his country from the dominion of Napoleon. And if the task was not congenial to him, he possessed one gift which made it easy for him to attach the willing service of others — the gift of charm. The "paradomania" of his youth had developed in him a fine sense of spectacle. Wherever he went he was followed by the eager glances of his countrymen, not because he was their Emperor — Emperors were not sacred to those who had strangled his father—but because he was Alexander himself, gravely smiling in the exercise of his authority. In Moscow he was spoken of as the Angel Incarnate, and miraculous influences were ascribed to him. The atmosphere of tragedy in which he seemed to move intensified men's respect and admiration. There was something sacred in the moral sufferings which they knew had been his. Tolstoi in his 'Peace and War' has ascribed to Rostov the devotion which was felt by the whole nation. The scene is familiar to all. The Tsar appears unexpectedly to the young soldier, who recognises in a half surprise his lamented, his idolised sovereign. "'But it can't be

he, alone in the middle of this empty field,' thought Rostov. At that moment Alexander turned his head, and Rostov saw the beloved features so vividly imprinted on his memory. The Tsar was pale, his cheeks looked sunken, and his eyes hollow, but the charm, the mildness of his face were only the more striking. Rostov felt happy in the certainty that the report of the Emperor's wound was false. He was happy that he was seeing him. He knew that he might, that he ought, indeed, to go straight to him and to give him the message he had been commanded to give by Dolgorukov." Yet, timid as a youth in love, Rostov, now that the long-desired moment had come, fears to approach his sovereign, and Tolstoi in the devout hesitation of one soldier makes his readers realise and understand something of the mystic influence which Alexander exerted almost unconsciously upon his compatriots. Even if he were infirm of purpose, if, as Adam Czartoryski declared, he was dilatory in the performance of his political duties, he was still to the Army and to all his simple subjects a miraculous apparition, a phantom Emperor for whom they were all content to live and to die and to wonder at.

Such was the Tsar of Russia, who, still gracious after defeat, met Napoleon at Tilsit in the unequal combat of wits. The two men presented all the glaring contrast which drama demands of life. "Napoleon," says M. Vandal, "c'est action; Alexandre, c'est le rêve." The differences between the two could not be more concisely or more clearly stated. They opposed one to the other not only their own temperaments, but the temperaments of their countries. Napoleon was a man with no rough edges. His outlines are still plainly defined against the sky of the past. He knew precisely what he wanted, and by what means he could attain it. Even the rapidity of his imagination, the sureness of his fancy, never ran in opposition to the laws of logic. He had defeated Alexander in fair fight, and he meant to get all the advantage he could out of the victory. The necessary result of his amazing triumph at Friedland was peace. Harbouring no resentment against his beaten foe, he was resolved to turn the new friendship to the best account. In 1807 he had but one end and one aim, to achieve a general peace by the conquest of England. He might for the moment be engaged with other countries, but every march he made, every battle he fought were but steps upon the same road. England was the enemy, and must be destroyed! And he was sure that Russia might serve better than any other to help him in the gratifying of his supreme ambition.

So he came into the conference—a man of action, armed for the discussion at all points. And opposite him sat Alexander, a child of romance, a Hamlet of the Steppes, mysterious and deceptive, like his northern

atmosphere, knowing not what he sought nor what he hoped of the future. "Ondoyant et divers," to use the words of Montaigne, he varied in mood and policy from day to day, completely unconscious that his very variableness would prove in the end the best of weapons wherewith to oppose Napoleon. In subtlety and cunning he was no match for his adversary, who was his superior also in years and in experience. A master of all the arts of flattery and cajolery, Napoleon had no difficulty at the first onset in outwitting Alexander. He spoke to him with a cunning sympathy of his liberal ideas and of the happy dreams of his youth. Like the great captain that he was, he told him tales of victories won in the field, of the vast ambitions which he cherished of universal dominion. In brief, he drew the feather of hope and wonder across the eyes of Alexander, who saw himself for the moment a proud sharer with Napoleon in the sovereignty of the world.

The setting of the stage was worthy the impassioned drama itself. Upon a raft in the Niemen the quick hands of the French had fashioned "une maisonnette très-joliment meublée," as a Russian Minister described it. Garlands of flowers hid the bareness of the walls, and everywhere the monograms of Napoleon and Alexander were seen interlaced. In this pavilion Napoleon received his august visitor, whom he saw now for the first time, and if he made a speedy conquest of Alexander, Alexander's amazing gift of intimacy set him instantly at his ease. For the first time in his life he was received by an autocrat, with whom yesterday he was at war, without disdain and without rancour. With a single phrase the Tsar laid what seemed a solid foundation to their friendship. "I hate the English as much as you do." "Then," answered Napoleon, "peace is made."

Thereafter followed military reviews and brilliant spectacles. In amœbean strains the two Emperors strove to show which could pay the other the better compliment. When they discussed which Ministers of State should represent them, "I will be your secretary," said Napoleon, "and you shall be mine." Truly, had it not been for the King of Prussia, whom Napoleon rightly detested, and who, lodging in a mill hard by, was admitted now and then, like a poor relation, into the imperial presence, the many conferences would have passed without a word of dispute. Unfortunately for himself, Alexander would not surrender the fettered Prussian to his fate. Better had it been for his country and for Europe if he had allowed the supine Frederick William to lie where he had fallen. But he did his best to save an unworthy friend, and the world has suffered ever since for his ill-judged complaisance.

However, Napoleon's tact brushed the Prussian bogey aside, and when they came to the making of terms Alexander accepted willingly the map of

Europe as France had redrawn it, and made no objection to any of her conquests. He even undertook the thankless task of mediating between England and France, promising to exact that she should grant that freedom of which we have heard so much ever since, and recognise that "the flags of all the Powers should enjoy an equal and perfect independence upon the seas." In brief, it was Alexander's hopeless task to persuade England to renounce all the advantages of her insularity and to present her throat to the knife of the first sovereign who resented her power and her ambition. Alexander failed in this project, as all others have failed who have striven to enchain the liberty of England; and though the cant phrase, "the liberty of the seas," will, we hope, never be spoken with approval by an English tongue, Napoleon and Alexander must have been strangely sanguine if they thought that by the mere promise of an insecure peace they could deceive the generation still proud of Copenhagen and Trafalgar.

The brilliant spectacle of Tilsit faded away, leaving behind it nothing more solid than a vague friendship and a dream of Eastern conquest. England brusquely declined the mediation of Russia, because the secret clauses in the agreement of Tilsit were concealed from her, and much to the chagrin of Napoleon, presently made it clear, through the mouths of her Ministers, that she would fight the pretension of the French to the dominion of Europe to her last man and her last bullet. But it was not England and her invincible fleet that touched the imagination of the Tsar. He was under the spell of a fairy story. When Napoleon spoke to him of the East and the triumphs that together they would achieve there, he became as a child who listened for the first time to the Arabian Nights. It was indeed the East which carried Napoleon on the strongest wing of eloquence. He painted in the liveliest colours how great would be his victory over England, if only with Russian aid he could pierce the Balkans and make himself master of Constantinople. It was his hope to use Turkey as a point of departure for an attack upon India. It was easier, thought he, to conquer the East than to cross the narrow, baffling Straits of Dover. All should conspire to the ruin of England. The Mediterranean should become a French lake, and an attack upon Egypt would not only shake to its foundations England's Asiatic Empire, and threaten her routes to India both by sea and by land, but it would utterly destroy her prestige, so that she would be ready to accept any terms that Napoleon might fling to her, as a bone to a dog.

That Napoleon had touched Alexander's imagination there is no doubt. That he had entirely overcome his distrust is less certain. Like all those cynics, who break their pledged

words and tear up pieces of paper, Napoleon was pursued in all that he said and did by a just suspicion. And if Alexander was for the moment beguiled, his people was resolute in opposition. Count Tolstoi, indeed, when he went to represent his sovereign in Paris, never succeeded in hiding a just distrust of Napoleon and his marshals, and once upon a time, returning from a review, almost came to fisticuffs with Ney. Nor in the tedious negotiations which followed the sentimentality of Tilsit could either side be brought to a decision. To Alexander the dominion of the East seemed a many-coloured dream, until he saw in his imagination Napoleon supreme at Constantinople and master of the Straits. And Napoleon, though he offered grimly to distribute the countries of other people, did not intend that Alexander should ever profit by a one-sided bargain. He had but one object—to throw dust in his friend's eyes and thus to deceive him into a political slavery. In his eager egoism he thought that he could make use of Alexander; he was resolved that Alexander should not make use of him. Bernadotte, speaking with the knowledge of later years, declared that Napoleon meditated war against Alexander at the very moment that he signed the Treaty of Tilsit, and Bernadotte no doubt was in the right of it. Moreover, Napoleon was not at the pains to understand Alexander's complex character; he did not perceive that Alexander's irresolution was of itself an accident of strength. At any rate, Alexander was incapable of adopting suddenly and irrevocably a policy disastrous for himself.

So Erfurt followed Tilsit, but the glorious rapture of the first meeting on the banks of the Niemen was never recaptured. What Napoleon in his amiable flattery called "le style de Tilsit" was dead and done with. Though Napoleon in his patronage of Wieland and Goethe proved himself once more the forerunner of romance in modern Europe, the ancient charm had ceased to work. And there was Talleyrand, scheming for France against her Emperor, ready to pour the poison of dissension into Alexander's ear. "Sire," said he, "what do you come here to do? It is for you to save Europe, and you can succeed in that enterprise only by holding your own against Napoleon. The French people is civilised; its sovereign is not. The sovereign of Russia is civilised; his people is not: it is, then, the duty of the sovereign of Russia to become the ally of the French people."

Such subtle counsel as this could not but have effect upon the mind of Alexander, whose youthful liberalism, combined with the influence of Speranski, the son of a pope and a violent reformer, suddenly appointed privy counsellor, convinced him that his duty was owed not to the French Em-

peror but to the Russian people. It was still Alexander's ambition to link Russia to the chain of Western civilisation — to create a nation, in fact, higher in its moral and intellectual level than that which the great Catherine had bequeathed to him. He saw at last that he could succeed in this purpose only by serving his own people and by putting away from his eyes the glamour of Napoleon. There remained his foolish attachment for the cause of the Prussians — "poor miserable creatures," Napoleon called them—and the loyal sympathy which he preserved for the abject Frederick William, made still wider the breach which began to yawn between the sworn brothers of Tilsit.

Meanwhile Napoleon was seduced by another adventure from what he deemed the main purpose of his life. In Spain and Portugal he had turned a deaf ear for a time to the imperative call of the East. Far from him then was the dream of 1807. Nor did the Tsar's refusal of his sister's hand and Napoleon's marriage with Marie Louise help to strengthen the weakening ties. Another cause of dissension was a friendship formed in Napoleon's despite between Bernadotte, now Crown Prince of Sweden, and the Tsar of Russia. Bernadotte, chosen heir to a throne, if not with Napoleon's approval, at least without his dissent, discovered rightly enough that he owed allegiance not to his late master but to his adopting country, and saw profit for Sweden in a close friendship with Russia. Napoleon's exasperation knew no bounds at what he thought the defection of a servant. He crossed the Niemen with an army, and sent away the Tsar's envoy of peace with scorn and contumely. In Tolstoi's 'Peace and War,' a masterpiece of fiction based upon accurate documents, Napoleon's fury against Balashov, Alexander's emissary, is described in the terms of truth. "As for the Swedes," said he, "it's their destiny to be governed by mad kings. Their king was mad. They changed him for another, Bernadotte, who promptly went mad; for no one not a madman could, being a Swede, ally himself with Russia. . . . Yes, I'll thrust you beyond the Dwina, beyond the Dneiper, and I'll restore the frontier that Europe was criminal and blind to let you overstep. Yes, that's in store for you, that's what you will gain by alienating me. And yet what a fine reign your master might have had."

The "fine reign" of Balashov's master was indeed but just beginning. As it was Napoleon's flattery which had once dazzled his fancy, so it was Napoleon's rancour which enabled him at last to see things as they were. For once this dreamer put away his dreams; for once this waverer formed a resolution, which nothing save death and destruction could break or bend. From the letters which passed between Alexander and Bernadotte in the year of destiny, 1812, you may deduce how strong was

the Tsar's determination, supported by Bernadotte's wise counsel, to make an end for ever of Napoleon's aggression. No longer did he use the suave style of Tilsit. He was ready to accept a peace if Napoleon would grant what he asked, and if as a preliminary every French soldier was withdrawn from Russian soil. He admitted the force of Bernadotte's warning that it was still Napoleon's object to divide the great states one against the other, and thus to facilitate the old project of the European hegemony. "I am making a war of delays," wrote Alexander, "and since a superior force is marching upon us, I am retiring to a fortified position, which I have prepared to that end. . . . Meanwhile you may be sure that, when once the war is begun, it is my firm resolve to make it last for years if necessary." With this end in view the Tsar avoided general engagements, and that new armies of reserve should be formed, betook himself to the heart of his empire that he might electrify his people and persuade it to make fresh sacrifices. His policy won the whole-hearted approval of Bernadotte, who never wavered in his belief, even when the armies of Napoleon were overrunning Russia, that the ultimate victory must be Alexander's. "He may gain the first, the second, even the third battle," he wrote; "the fourth will be undecided, and if your Majesty perseveres you will certainly gain the fifth."

Then suddenly there comes news of disaster. Kutusof has not profited by his victory; the road to Moscow lies open to the enemy; the capital has fallen into the hands of the French, who find there none to welcome them but the porters of the houses. Yet Alexander's resolution was still adamant. "It is a cruel loss, I admit, but of moral and political rather than military import. At any rate it will give me the chance of proving to the whole of Europe that I mean to sustain this struggle against the oppressor with all possible perseverance, for after this wound everything else will seem but a scratch." Thus the famous retreat of the Russians was victoriously achieved, and the urgent overtures of Napoleon contemptuously dismissed. What was his letter of peace but a mass of *fanfaronnades?* Thus the burning of Moscow was endured by a brave people with a shrug. And then, in October, came the crowning reward of the Tsar's persistence and resolution. "Monsieur mon Frère et Cousin," wrote Alexander to Bernadotte, "I have with the utmost fidelity kept your Royal Highness exactly informed of my reverses; it is but just that I relate to you the successes which the Russian armies have lately won." And so he goes on to describe, without exultation or boastfulness, the marvellous victories which his brave generals had wrested from the French. Here the Bavarians are beaten, and lost in their defeat eight guns and twenty-

two flags. There the King of Naples was put to flight, leaving upon the field a standard and thirty pieces of artillery. The Polish general, Tischekwistschk, of whose prowess Napoleon had proudly boasted, had surrendered with 2000 men. The Emperor Napoleon had gone hot-foot to Smolensk, telling his army to follow by the same route. All the roads of Russia leading west were strewn with dead horses and abandoned munitions of war. Never were good tidings more plainly told or more joyously received. A few weeks later there was still better news to tell. Ney's lot was the most deplorable of all. His retreat being completely cut off, he lost in two days 117 pieces and 20,000 men, with four generals. Thus victory followed upon victory, triumph upon triumph. There was but one disappointment—that Napoleon himself escaped from Russia with the few poor remnants of his army. But it mattered not. As the retreat from Moscow was the end of Napoleon's hopes of conquest, so it was the beginning of Europe's liberation. Once more the plain truth was established that Russia is unconquerable, that it is at his peril that the bravest invader dares to cross the river which divides East and West.

If statesmanship be recorded history, if we may divine the future in the glass of the past, how many lessons, how many hopes may be drawn from the progress and ultimate end of this long duel! With Russia, the vast and mysterious, the victory lay then, as it will lie to-day. The omens are good, and we look back with gratitude to Alexander, the Hamlet, whose resolution was hardened in the moment of peril, because he proved to us that Russia, inviolable by genius, will never yield to the attack of efficient and second-rate brutality.

FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

ANIMAL!

LAST cold weather there was a rising among the Kachins, north of the Jade Mines in Burma. The Kachins are a race of caterans who live in the mass of hills that separate Burma from Tibet and China, and contain, besides the Kachins, a jumble of tribes such as the Nagas, Abors, Mishmis, and others, who are looked upon with a great deal of fear and disfavour by their neighbours. These neighbours are mostly Chinese, Burmese, and Shans. It is the proper thing to say that these neighbour races are possessed of an ancient civilisation. Those who have travelled much in the outlying parts are apt to say that the civilisation has become senile. Others, more tolerant, call them semi-civilised. The most favourable view is that they are at least as civilised as the manipulators of poison-gas cylinders and *flammen werfer*, or the explosive, *Gott strafe England* staff of papers such as the 'Kölnische Zeitung' and the 'Hamburger Nachrichten,' who chant a perpetual anthem on the theme, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen."

The views of the Chinese about all races but their own are well known, and they have no hesitation in lumping all the troublesome races, Kachins and others, together as *yèjên*, wild men. The Burmese and Shans have a more subtle way of insinuating the same thing. A special feature of their languages is what grammarians call numerative auxiliaries, or generic nouns. Thus they speak of pots as so many round things; articles of clothing as so many things to be worn; horses and carts as so many things to be ridden. The idea is extended to human beings, and the numerative auxiliary *yauk* means a fellow-creature, male or female. The old-fashioned still look upon all persons who have not at one time or other worn the yellow robe and become Buddhists, as outside humanity. Thus in the old days the formula was not two foreigners, but two head of foreigners, as we should say two head of cattle. The heaven-born and choleric military and police officers have weaned them from this practice as far as white men are concerned, but Kachins and all other hill-tribes are regularly referred to as Kachins, so many head, or, more shortly, so many bestial Kachins.

Whether they are civilised or not, Orientals have a very acute perception of what constitutes a *sahib*, and they are now convinced that no German is a *sahib*, and refer to any one they come across as *Jaman tagaung*, a German animal, as if he were a pig or a bullock. What is more, the Burmese are now persuaded that the

Kachins, or the clan of them that rebelled last winter, were incited to do so by the Germans. Five-and-twenty years ago there was a good deal of mixed fighting before the Kachins were taught to let their neighbours alone. They had been gradually pressing southwards during the last years of Burmese rule, and they lifted cattle and "sorned upon" the valley dwellers, and carried away prisoners to be sold as slaves in the far north, as a mere matter of ordinary routine. Their methods were in fact an intelligent anticipation of *Kultur*.

They fought against our troops with the valour of ignorance, for they had not been accustomed to be attacked, and they had a firm belief in the impenetrability of their hills; but in a year or two they saw that pertinacity was no use against foreign weapons, and they gave in and even enlisted in the Military and Civil Police, which seemed to hold out opportunities for their national talents.

But the clan that rebelled last year had never previously given trouble, and it was quite handy to British outposts. Moreover, they fought with a great deal of dogged persistence and much more system than had ever been seen before. This was noticed by all their neighbours, and a Shan *Sawbwa*, the ruler of one of the native States, commented on it in a darbar of his Ministers and district headmen.

"It has been reported to us, and we have read it in the Royal news-sheets from Rangoon, that the Kachin riff-raff have been fighting with the seigniory. Has anything been heard about it in the bazaar?"

The Chief Minister, who was kneeling on the floor in front of the dais on which the *Sawbwa* sat in a gilded Austrian bentwood chair, placed his hands together palm to palm, twice raised them rapidly up and down, and said: "Our Lord who is The Lord knows everything. The bullock caravan man, Ai Pan, who has been north to buy pickled tea, submits a humble statement that there has been much fighting. Three of the Royal Government's fighting men have been hit, one of them an English war-officer, but of the Kachin bestial many died. There was a hill-clearing covered with them, killed by one of the rotten balls that burst in pieces when they fall. So Ai Pan knocks his head and makes petition."

"That is what we have read in the Royal Government newspaper," said the *Sawbwa*. "There is talk that the Kachin sons of dogs were very bold. They attacked at night, just as wild animals do, leopards and cats and owls and such-like. We ourselves have fought with them many years ago, before the Royal Government overthrew the evil-doers and made peace with the well-disposed. The Kachins did not fight as respectable human beings fight. They came at night to our stockades and

surreptitiously shot those who were wandering outside against our express commands. They also hid in bushes and rolled stones down the hillside and set fire to dried grass. They discarded all rules and laws. Therefore we declined to fight any more with them and left them to themselves.

"The English are different. They fight in a proper way, as it is related of our ancestors in palm-leaf manuscripts and State histories. They are a respectable enemy, and therefore we never fought with them. But there were some hot-headed youngsters and bad characters from other States who did fight, and they were suitably chastened and taught wisdom. The Kachins also, in the reign of our brother, who has gone to the Village of Spirits, they also fought with the Royal Government, and many died, to the great comfort of all right-minded people. The Kachins were trained as one trains a kicking bullock or a snapping dog. They have given no trouble for many years. But the Royal newspapers say that this Kachin clan had never resisted the Great King's Supreme Royal Government before. How comes it that they have now been so irrational? Did Ai Pan hear any talk?"

"Our Lord Who is The Lord has nothing concealed from him," said the Chief Minister. "Ai Pan was told by the pagoda founders and churchwardens at many places that the Kachins had been misguided and deceived by two Jamans, who came wandering through their villages after the fields had been prepared for the sowing."

"Jamans!" exclaimed the *Sawbwa* excitedly; "I know the Jamans." He was so roused by the mere mention of the name German that he forgot the darbar ceremonial language and spoke for some minutes in the common vernacular. "The Jamans are fighting with the Royal Government. Everybody knows that. I have caused the copper-wire messages (telegrams) of the Royal Government to be translated and put up in all market-places and read aloud by all village headmen. From these you know what the Jamans are. They use poison just as the brute beast tribes in the hills do, the Muhsö and the Lihsaw, and all that vermin. But the hill savages kill only wild beasts, and now and then a man with their poisoned arrows. The Jamans poison all the air and kill the whole people of a countryside, the pretty little maidens and the crowing babies, and they are proud of it, and their King gives them Royal Orders and fine garments. And they send men under the water to hide in the mud like crocodiles, and destroy boats and drown many people, and again they are glad, especially when they drown the women, for they say, 'Now they will have no more children to herd the cattle and pull up the weeds and drive away the birds.' And they send up men in the air, just as

we read in the Royal Chronicle of the rafts that the great kings used to visit their far-away countries. Those great men of our history, when they landed, built pagodas and endowed monasteries. They fed the monks and held great festivals for the people. But the Jamans in their flying rafts throw down fire-balls and destroy sacred buildings and burn the houses of the cultivators. And the Jamans are glad, and especially they are glad when they burn the bungalows where they heal the wounded and give medicine to those who are stricken with disease. They are like the dacoits, who let fly fire-arrows into the villages of harmless, industrious revenue-payers, and when the people ran away came in and stole all the property. That is what the Jamans are. They are dacoits and the sons of dacoits. In past existences they were without doubt Kachins, thieves, robbers, cattle-lifters, fire-raisers, and workers of all manner of evil. Assuredly they will have their reward. In the next existence they will be lodged in the lowest hell, and there they will remain for many billions of years."

The *Sawbwa* stopped to take breath, and there was a general chorus all round the hall: "It is very true, O Lord. We bow our heads at your feet, and raise our hands above our head."

The Revenue Minister added: "Without doubt the Jamans are not the fellow-creatures even of those who have not yet attained humanity. They are creeping dragons that have taken on human shape. They are ogres that pretend to be men in order that they may kill and gulp down the blood of the religious. Until the All-merciful Buddha preaches the Law to them they will not attain man's shape again for many score of æons. Does Our Lord who is The Lord, remember the Jaman animal who came to the Royal Palace two years ago, the year when there was much cattle-plague in the eastern circles?"

"We do," said the *Sawbwa*, with some asperity. "He was a two-legged thing without sense of honour or shame, sunk in depravity and oozing deceit. He came here with a party of *sipahi* war-soldiers, who were taking rations to the post east of the hills. We thought he was an English war-leader, so we invited him to our *haw* (palace) and lodged him in the south-west guest-chamber. But next day, when the ration-soldiers marched away, he did not go with them, but stayed here four, five, or eight days. And during that time he ate and drank very much, and especially he drank beer of which we keep some bottles for medicinal purposes. And he told us that he had skill in painting pictures, and said he would paint a likeness of me, to be kept as a remembrance. We told him that we had many sunlight pictures, which war-officers and ladies, and even the Political Officer, had manufactured and presented to us. But he said these were inferior

things, and not worthy of a ruling lord, and that his method of portraying was the only one fitted for a notable person. So he put a large piece of paper on a board, and he drew and worked with brushes for several days. He was not like Ai Sung, our court limner, who will paint a pagoda, or an image of the Buddha with many worshippers, in the time it takes to boil a pot of rice or chew a fid of betel. He did it slowly, as Mawng Sa, the professor of tattooing, does his patterns. And all the time he told us to talk, not like the officers who make the air pictures. They always say: 'Do not move; stay just like that. Thank you.' But the Jaman animal, he said to the interpreter: 'Tell His Highness he must talk. He must not look like a plaster image; he must look intelligent.' And when we asked about what we should talk, he said we should tell him about our State, and the other Shan States, and the English Government and the soldiers. Always at night he asked many questions, and when he had drunk much beer, he said he was Jaman, and that the Jaman king was the greatest king, with the biggest cannon and the most rifles, and vessels that fly in the sky and boats that go under the water. And we thought it was the beer, for, besides that it is medicine, beer makes some men talk and sing and behave as if it was the rice-spirit that the hill-women sell on market-days. But since then we have learnt that some of it was true, for there is much about the fighting in the royal newspapers; and Ai Leng, who has come back from jail in Rangoon, where they taught him to make furniture, chairs, and tables, Ai Leng has seen the ships flying in the air, just like flying-foxes or vultures, and there have been many air-pictures of the flying ships and of boats which go under the water, just like dab-chicks. And the English war-officer who comes here and gives sweets to the children in the bazaar, and pays a rupee to all the men that go out to beat the jungles for him when he is successful and shoots forest beasts, and only gives eight annas when he gets nothing, the English officer has told us that it is all true, and that there are great cannon that could fire from here over the hills into Kat Lông bazaar three *daing*, eight miles, away, so it was not all the beer. The fighting is like the fighting of wizards and devils, yet the English war-officer wants very much to go to fight the Jamans. You have all heard him."

The entire darbar answered in chorus: "It is very true, O Lord who art The Lord, your bond-slaves have heard him many times."

And the Chief Minister said: "The deeds of the Jamans that he has told your servants exceed in wickedness the devices of the worst of evil spirits and the schemes of the ruler of the sixth Deva-loka, but the war-

thakin is angry because he must stay here."

The *Sawbwa* took a big green cherut from an attendant, and after five or six puffs handed it back again, and continued: "The Jaman went on painting and talking for several days until the beer was all finished. He began three or four times to say shameful things about the black war-soldiers, but we told him that it was not wise to say such words, for the *sipahi* were very peppery men and not accustomed to argue. Indeed the smallest of them preferred fighting as a means of passing the time, just as the bull-terrier we have never goes out without damaging some of the native dogs of our capital, and cannot be taught to do otherwise, even when they are very humble. Yet the Jaman would not listen, but every night he talked foolishness. But when he had drunk all our beer he finished the picture very quickly, and he fastened it on the wall with small nails where you see it, and he said: 'There! that is a portrait the like of which there has not been seen in this country at any time before. Your people will bow down before it; your children will pray before it; your posterity for many generations will say, How was it that our ancestor found so clever an artist? The picture will only cost you five hundred rupees.'

"Then we replied: 'Five hundred rupees! That is the price of eight or ten yoke of plough cattle. It is the first time we have heard you make a joke since you came to the *haw*.' But he turned to me and said in a voice like a pedlar, 'It is not any joke. You have wasted many days for me. I have given you much information on many things. The picture is very cheap, for I am a very celebrated painter of pictures. I am a Jaman.'

"Then we were very angry, but we did not show it to him. We said: "We do not like your picture. It is all yellow on one side and black on the other. Our face is not yellow, and it is not black on one side. Neither is the gold on our coat all tarnished and black on the right-hand side. There is, moreover, a fashionable pattern on our turban which your picture takes no notice of. It has no pattern at all. You can take your picture away. We have no use for it. If you roll it up we can give you a joint of bamboo to keep it in. In what direction do you wish to travel?'

"Then he talked still more loud, and said: 'I will report you to the Political Officer. I will inform the Jaman Emperor, and he will be very angry. You have detained me here many days. I have much important business to do, but you have made me paint your picture, which is a great honour for you. You must pay me five hundred rupees, or there will be much trouble.'

"Then we saw that he was a coolie, a disreputable person with no instruction and no breeding or decorum, and in fact simply an animal like the wild men that live in the hills

and are utterly without humanity. So we gave him the rupees, and issued orders to the Minister who is in charge of the Western District to give him guides who would take him out of the country as soon as possible. That is what we know of the Jamans. They are coolies; they are wholly without manners or decency; they are cattle; they are predestined to wander on desert sea-shores and mountains and in dismal forests. It is very likely that it was this Jaman, with some other animal Jaman, who made trouble among the Kachins. What we have said is true, is it not, Revenue Minister? You gave him the money from the Treasury."

"It is very true, O Lord," replied the Minister of the Treasury. "I counted out to him five hundred rupees, and he wanted a bag to put them in, and I said we had no bags. We found it more convenient to wrap the money in banana leaves or native paper, so that we could count it rapidly in rolls of fifty or twenty, and I offered to get him some leaves. I could find no old tough leaves, so I went to the shop of Ai Long and bought some stout paper for one pice. When I came back he told me that several of the rupees were bad, and they certainly were bad, there was no saying that it was not so. There were several tens of them, and I suggested that they must surely be some of the monies that he had brought with him from Burma or from other States where there were dishonourable men. It was impossible that he could have got them in the State of Our Lord who is The Lord, for all the coins here are scrupulously good and untainted, and especially the treasure of the exalted exchequer of Our Lord who is The Lord. But he replied in language that was repugnant to the Buddhist religion, and most shocking to the dignity of the guardian of the coffers of Our Lord who is The Lord, before whose feet I knock my head. So I gave the bestial Jaman good money of my own, and I went from the chamber without the customary leave-taking, and I struck the bell in the pagoda precincts to call the attention of the spirits of the earth and the air to his knavery. Without a doubt the Jamans are animals, and they are animals like those on the lowest rung of the ladder of existence, even as the vermin that prey clandestinely on the religious."

The Minister of the Western Circles chimed in and said: "I also beg permission to lay a few words at the feet of Our Lord who is The Lord. I made arrangements for the departure out of the country of the German animal. His language was such as to show that he not only had no humanity, but that he had been in the habit of consorting with men of the lowest class, opium-smokers, thieves, and gamblers. Truly it was not without reason that in the old days painters, actresses, and those who do not believe in the merit of good works, were not allowed to bear witness in

court. The words which that bestial German used were such as can only be murmured in the Eight Great Hells and some of the smaller ones. He told me that he must have mules to carry his luggage. I informed him that it was not the custom for mules to be used in this State. That was only customary where there were Chinamen, but I said he could have bullocks. He immediately replied in most unbecoming language that a pack-bullock was not a seemly animal for a Jaman, and that it could neither go fast enough nor far enough for a man with the important duties that he had. So I gave orders that he should have coolies, and that they should be changed from village to village, and I gave secret orders that they should take him away as fast as possible, lest the spirits of the clouds, mists, and exhalations should punish the town for enduring his presence. They took him away accordingly, but I have had petitions from all the villages that he not only did not pay the coolies their wages, but that he claimed to have food given to him free, which he said was the prerogative of his dignity, and that it was a privilege for the commonalty to supply food to a Jaman. This he asserted with much language such as Gaw-dam, which Our Lord who is The Lord knows to be a low expression, used by those who are inebriated, and with other words which neither I nor they had ever heard before, but clearly were expletives in the Jaman tongue of a kind that were a danger to society and an offence to religion. Therefore I told the petitioners that it would not be well to pursue such an animal, and that they should rather congratulate themselves that they were rid of him. I assured them that that bestial Jaman and all like him could not escape the Five Calamities, the Four States of Punishment, and the Five Enemies. I also advised them to send fleet-footed despatch runners ahead of him to warn the headmen and the orthodox of the character and methods of the vagrant animal, and to suggest that, for the sake of the avoidance of discord and unprofitable wrangling, he should be supplied with eggs, but that they should be eggs such as are ordinarily kept for many weeks in anticipation of the arrival of vaccinators and cattle-plague little doctors. I also said that it might have satisfactory results if they were to report to the Royal Government Forest Officer, that the Jaman animal was in the habit of shooting jungle birds and beasts regardless of the rules and regulations as to time and Royal Government Reserves by the Royal Government enacted."

"Our Minister did well," said the *Sawbwa*, "but last bazaar day we received an official letter from the Royal Forest Officer, who said that he had inquired as to the alleged malpractices and irregularities of the Jaman animal, as reported by many of our subordinate officials, but

after due inquiry he had learned that the Jaman had shot none but doves and king-crows, and minas and suchlike birds as the Royal Department does not concern itself with, and that therefore no offence had been committed. He thanked us for our loyalty and scrupulous attention to laws and orders, and said that he was glad to think that the partridges and barking-deer and other game creatures were being carefully protected, since it was his intention to come on the tenth of next waxing moon, when according to the British Constitution and the Forest Regulations it would be right and proper to shoot game-birds according to schedule.

"We have also heard from our younger brother, the Chief of the State to the South, that he profited by our letter which we sent to him announcing that a foreigner of the species and caste called Jaman was travelling in his direction. We said we thought it desirable and helpful that he should know that this person was indeed a thing in human form, but that he had shown himself to be wanting in disinterestedness and was wholly ignorant of the Ten Commandments as laid down by the Lord, the Law, and the Assembly, and that his language and habits were such as could commend themselves to nobody. We particularly suggested that it would be inexpedient to permit this vagabond to paint a portrait. The result would probably be unflattering, and the acknowledgment claimed would undoubtedly be such as to disturb the composure of the least irascible. Moreover the neglect to secure a portrait would shorten the stay of this person, and this would in itself be an advantage which the most benevolent could view with complaisance. Our younger brother replied that he had not had any portrait of himself drawn, but out of curiosity and because of her insistence, he had allowed the Jaman animal to make a sketch of one of the little wives. This lady was so annoyed at the way in which the Jaman drew her hair that she retired into the inner chambers and refused to come out again. The Jaman insisted that he must be recompensed, and there was some discussion. The little wife heard this, and she came out from the women's apartments and talked to the Jaman with such briskness and volubility that he painted no more, and went away very dissatisfied. But he asked many questions about the copper which they dig out of the ground in our younger brother's State. He also pointed out many Jaman goods in the bazaar, which he said were very good and cheap, better than those of the Royal Government. We are convinced that he was a common person of the huckstering class."

"Truly, O Lord Who art The Lord, the Jamans are wholly shameless and profligate," said the Chief Minister. "As Our Lord knows, the Rahan who dwells in the Zetawun monastery has made a pilgrimage to the holy

places. When he was in Pagān there was a Jaman who made pretence that he was a believer in the words of the All-merciful Buddha. He had much money, and he hired coolies to dig in the foundations of the many sacred monuments that are there, crumbling with the weight of years. And he found many sacred fragments with holy words and representations of the Lord Buddha on them. But he did not dedicate these to the glory of the Benignant One. He wrapped them in paper as if they were merchandise and put them away in boxes as if they were goods for sale. And he did more than this. He went stealthily to the aisles and corridors of the great temples, and while the woman that was with him took air-pictures of the holy places, he corruptly and sinfully removed the tiles, inscribed with sacred texts of old, which the wisest nowadays cannot read, and the portrayings and delineations which the most learned cannot explain, and he even took images of the Buddha and carried them away. The Rahan was greatly disturbed and grieved, and he went to the Jaman animal and preached the Law to him. But the foredoomed miscreant was so utterly unrepentant and devoid of any conception of his sacrilege that he proposed to buy the yellow robes of the Rahan, and even held ribald coins before the holy man's eyes as if he were a cadger. The Rahan was so shocked that he came near to using language such as is only customary with those who have not entered on the Eightfold Path.

"But he restrained himself and went and reported these enormities to the Officer of the Royal Government, who was greatly concerned and caused the bestial Jaman to be watched, and found that it was even so as had been reported to him. So the Jaman was arrested, and the things he had stolen were put back in the sacred places. But the woman that was with him was greatly infuriated, and used words such as are only heard from the baggages that sew sacks in rice-mills and carry goods on board foreign ships. She took some air-pictures of the seizing of the Jaman, and said she would send them to the Jaman King, who is as flaunting a person as a peacock with his tail up. No one has heard whether the Jaman King wrote letters to the Deputy Commissioner, but it may be that he urged on the Kachins to rebel against the Royal Government. It was told to the Rahan that the impious Jaman who robbed the holy places was a great man in his own country and 'ate' broad estates, and had a title like that of Senapati in spiritual countries such as that of Our Lord who is The Lord."

"Truly the Jamans are barbarians and the avatars of barbarians," said the *Sawbwa*. "Even those who by means

of the merit accumulated by some of their ancestors have respectable positions among them, seem to be not easily distinguishable from the higher animals, and the lowest class of those peoples who have not yet attained humanity. Last year, you will remember, our elder brother, who lives on the eastern side of the great river, wrote to us a letter of warning to say that a violent person had suddenly come into his State out of China. He had with him many mules carrying his goods, and, after the manner of the mule caravan men, he travelled very many miles every day. But always he had with him maps, and he spread these out and looked with instruments like those of the land-measurers at the sun and at the hills, and he used language which no one understood, but which the most simple-minded could readily perceive was neither seemly nor such as the pure of heart would use. And always he gave himself vain and boasting airs, and he carried his head as if he had a bad smell under his nose. And when the Warden of the Marches, as is the custom, asked him what he did for a living, he snorted like a horse that has not done any work for many days, and he said he did not do any work, he was the captain of a war-boat.

"Then the Warden, who was a travelled man and had been to Mandalay in the times of the Burmese kings, said he had known some captains of war-boats which had as many as forty or fifty paddlers, and that they had some of the king's paddy lands assigned to them to eat, and he asked how many acres the Royal Government had allotted to him. Thereupon this strange man was suddenly greatly enraged. He flung his arms about and spat on the ground and behaved as no man with proper instruction and good breeding and right manners would think of doing. He said his ship was three thousand cubits long and had a thousand men on board it. He also said that he did not belong to the Royal Government, but that he was a Jaman. The Warden then began to see that he was wandering in his mind, and he said he had heard some people say that there were other Governments besides the Royal Government, but he had never had time to go to inspect them, and he did not remember having heard the Jaman Government mentioned. Doubtless it was in one of the small islands of the Thamoodhaya Sea, or perhaps it was a district of Roosha, of which he had heard the Royal Government's sepoys speak. They represented that there were many frontier disputes, probably connected with cattle-stealing and wandering bands of evil-doers.

"The stranger then became even more violently angry. He jumped up and rushed outside without any of the amenities of those who have learned decorum. But immediately afterwards he came back again and said he must

give orders about his horse. His manner was like that of the lictors who cleared the way when a Royal Prince was making a progress, but the Warden bore with him on account of his suspicions. He replied that he had indeed seen his horse. It was a very large horse. It seemed to be three and a half cubits high, at least a cubit higher than the hill ponies. Did the horse require medicine? The Chinese muleteers were skilled in horse sicknesses, but there was a horse-doctor in the village who was well spoken of. The Jaman said his horse was quite well, but it was a very remarkable horse. It would not eat paddy like common ponies of the country, and there was no grain such as it was accustomed to in its own country. Therefore the horse must be supplied with peas and beans to eat, and immediate orders must be issued to this effect throughout the whole State in the direction in which he was to go.

"The Warden said it should be done, but at the same time he wrote to the *Sawbwa*, our Elder Brother, to tell him that a demented man was travelling southwards and that he should be treated with great kindness, as is customary with those of unsound mind, because he was a man of violent speech and it would be well to get rid of him as soon as possible. He was not like the poor daft man who had come three years before, and did nothing but collect orchids and flowering plants. That man was a kindly creature who paid generous sums for mere trifles, but this man called himself a Jaman, and talked much nonsense in quite lawless language and with much pig-headedness. All madmen are possessed of devils, and though a man gains much merit by showing kindness to them, yet it is wiser to hurry them on their way, so that others may have the opportunity of gaining merit from good works.

"He also wrote to the Political Officer, Sa-mit Thakin, the same who used to be here, and was called the Tiger Wundauk by the common people, and sometimes the Thunder and Lightning Judge, because he was always in such a hurry. We see that you all smile; but he was very popular here, and everybody was sorry when he left, for he always lent cartridges for the shove-behind guns, and when there were festivals, he gave rupees to the little boys to buy crackers and to the little girls to buy candles and flowers for the shrines; and when a boy entered the monastery he was always generous, and the girls of the dancing troupes all loved him because he gave them foreign flowers for their hair that lasted many moons even with the most hoydenish, and brown sweetmeats in picture boxes which they liked very much. But it is not to be denied that he was short in the temper when he did not get straight answers, and said many things that are not in the Holy Books.

"Well, when the Political

Officer heard about this rude Jaman, he said: 'A Jaman! The Jamans are people that have wind in the head and their hands in other people's pockets. It is the Jamans that sell trashy piece-goods in the bazaar and send knives that bend over when you try to cut a banana. The Jamans must be taught manners when they come among my people.' And he jumped on his pony and rode off, as if the Jaman war-boat man was just round the corner instead of five or six hill-ranges away. He did not catch him; but perhaps he prevented the Jaman and his horse from coming westwards to our State, as our Elder Brother wrote to us that it was his injurious intention to do. It is possible that the animal Jaman heard that the Tiger *Wundauk* was coming. It is said that all Jamans have uncanny sources of information. But at any rate it is true that the Jaman had disappeared over the frontier into Siam before the Political Officer had come up with him. But all the people were glad, and it is said that the Siamese had very much trouble.

"Therefore you see that the Jamans have only a semblance of human shape, and have no fellowship with human beings. By reason of the insignificant merits of previous existences they have escaped from falling into the state of animals; but it is certain that hereafter they will be born again,—some as stinging serpents and loathly worms, some as weasels and beetles, the best of them as carrion-eating vultures. It is well that we should hasten that time, since they are not only wicked themselves, but inflame the bestial Kachins into acts of violence from which they had been weaned. Therefore we have set apart one-twentieth part of the revenues of our State for the purpose of enabling the Royal Government to overcome them and teach them the law. Moreover, it is enacted that any Jaman who enters the State must be arrested. Jamans are a stiff-necked people who resist arrest. It is known to such of you as are acquainted with the law of the Royal Government that it is permissible to use violence towards those who resist arrest, and if the violence is excessive it is no offence."

And all the Ministers said: "True, O Lord, Who art The Lord. We note your instructions. They are very wise, and we knock our heads."

J. George Scott.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

READING MATTER FOR THE GERMAN SOLDIER—FACTS FOR THE KAISER—GERMANY'S BEST FRIENDS.

If we undertook, after the manner of the seventeenth century, to sketch a "character" of the Germans, based upon the words and deeds of the past year, we should depict a monster of hideous mien, compact of mendacity, cruelty, and blasphemy. Their cruelty is solidly and universally established, and no more need be said of it here. Upon their mendacity and blasphemy another fresh and vivid light is cast by a little book, entitled 'Der Kaiser rief,' which 'The Morning Post' tells us in a timely analysis is distributed among the German troops by a "War Committee to provide Soldiers at the Front and in Hospital with Reading Matter." Never was a more monstrous document presented to the credulous servants of their country. The Kaiser does not call to his soldiers; he shouts. For lying self-complacency and deceptive cunning it has not its match in all the mass of false witness concocted by the Germans since the war began. After the common formulæ that England wanted the war, and that the Emperor is a lover of peace, the Kaiser, or the gifted personage who holds his pen, drops into a nauseous hypocrisy, such as would have affronted Tartuffe himself. "Against all these enemies," says the tract, after enumerating Egypt, Morocco, and the rest, "we were at first three; there is a fourth, however, whom we name with reverence." And then there follows the old, old story of the Kaiser's talk with the Father in charge of a monastery. "We here are also allies of your Majesty," murmured the Father; and the Emperor replied, "Father, that is good, but our great Ally is up above."

We should have thought that the craft of blasphemy could not be carried further. Yet the Kaiser can do better even than this. "No sovereign," thus the precious document proceeds, "has such a clean conscience as our God-fearing Emperor, and his exalted ally, the Emperor Francis Joseph; and both wield the swords with clean hands. However often our enemies have violated the laws of nations, however often they have stained their hands with cruelties and unnecessary measures of violence, our Emperor has never allowed any unjust acts to be committed. He is fighting for a just cause with rightful weapons, with a clean conscience, and with clean hands. God is his witness." In vain

does he call upon God to be his witness. France and Belgium, England and Russia, are witnesses of his cowardly falsehood. Does he think that God approved the butchery of Belgium, and the murder of Miss Cavell? What sort of a God is it, we wonder, to which he offers his worship? A monster fashioned in Prussia, and drenched in the sacrificial blood of innocent women and children.

If the Kaiser is Tartuffe in jack-boots, he does his best to turn his soldiers into Pharisees. "We are not like English mercenaries," they are taught to say. Alas! we know too well that they are not. And so they are asked to whisper—let us hope with their tongues in their cheeks—these consolatory boastings: "I am not armed with treacherous cunning and brute force, and not with cowardly lies or with a cruel lust for revenge; my weapons are honesty and loyalty, manly courage and discipline, the fear of God and trust in God." As a last crowning piece of hypocrisy, the German soldiers are warned that God's commandments must be observed even in war. "Innocent women, children, and old people must not be ill-treated or killed, and women and girls must not be outraged." Louvain and Termonde, Scarborough and Whitby, London and Lynn, and many another open town, could tell the Germans how flagrantly their Kaiser lies or how impudently his soldiers disobey him. The Germans are not eminent in humour, but even the most desperate Junker must grin when he reads in the field or in the hospital the final effrontery of his Kaiser. "Do you know," asks the Kaiser's mouthpiece, "why so many people in Belgium and France welcomed the arrival of the German troops?" And pat comes the answer, a veritable masterpiece of shameless insolence: "It was because they were certain that under the protection of the German soldiers they would not be outraged, nor would their belongings be stolen by their own men!" Who are they for whom such lies as these are told? To what a depth of decivilisation have been sunk, those who read and hear them without the laughter of scorn.

No better commentary upon the Kaiser's policy of deceiving, or pretending to deceive, his soldiers can be found than 'Germany's Violations of the Laws of War,' translated and suitably introduced by M. J. O. P. Bland. Point for point the Kaiser's pretensions to humanity and justice are refuted overwhelmingly. The noisy "call" of the Kaiser is silenced by a solemn, unadorned accumulation of facts. It is plain that the soldiers, whose salvation, according to their Emperor, is iron discipline, violated the laws of God and man with the same ferocity in France as in Belgium. "Our Emperor," boasts the German pamphlet, "has never allowed

any unjust acts to be committed." From this absurd affectation of gentleness turn to the grim record compiled under the auspices of the French Foreign Office, and you will be in no doubt which to believe. Sworn testimony and the facsimiles of German documents speak louder than perjured Emperors, and if ever the neutral countries, official signatories of The Hague Conventions, again profess the smallest interest in the conduct of war, whose humanity they are pledged to protect, they will have no difficulty in condemning the German troops, whose weapons, according to their Kaiser's ridiculous pronouncement, are "honesty and loyalty, manly courage and discipline." Let us take their outrages in order, and let us begin with the killing of prisoners and wounded. That is a monstrosity which we suppose the Kaiser would openly condemn, and of which his troops are as openly guilty. Indeed there is irrefragable evidence that the duty of wholesale massacre was enforced upon them by their officers. Here, for instance, is General Stenger's famous Order of the Day, which places the German guilt beyond question. "From and after to-day," thus it runs, "no more prisoners are to be taken. All prisoners are to be massacred. The wounded, whether with or without arms, are to be killed off. No living enemy must be left behind us." A fine ambition to be set before the army, whose Kaiser blasphemously urges it to pray to Almighty God that he may "lead them to victory and be gracious to them, so that they may show they are Christians even towards their enemies." Better a thousand times the frank and brutal Hun of Attila's breed than these snivelling hypocrites who drive in the assassin's knife with false prayers upon their lips.

And the accusations made by the French against the Germans do not depend only upon the testimony of their own soldiers. The Germans are convicted out of their own mouths. Here, for instance, is the evidence of Private A. of the 38th Reserve Regiment: "On the 23rd August," says he, "Captain Zeiche gave the order to shoot Frenchmen. On the 9th September six French soldiers were taken prisoners and eight more in the afternoon; that made fourteen men in all, and they also were shot, and there was there a doctor who examined them, and when they had all been killed they were buried by the order of the officer commanding the company, and I, A., was there too when these men were shot." Such is the statement of one among many witnesses. Here is another, taken from the notebook of a non-commissioned officer of the 85th Regiment of Infantry, named Gottsche: "October 6, 1914.—Are wanted to take the fort at once," he writes, "but we had first to camp at Kesul. The captain called us round him and said:

'In the fort we are going to take there will very probably be English soldiers. But I don't want to see any English prisoners with my company.' A general Bravo of approval was the answer." This extract is full of instruction, since it proves not only the brutality of the order, but the enthusiasm with which it was greeted. The soldiers in the ranks must indeed share the blame which attaches to the officers. The German army seemed to be imbued with one spirit only, the spirit of a lawless cruelty. And the Kaiser calls God to witness that he fights with a clear conscience and with clean hands!

Again it is insisted in the Kaiser's 'Call' that "innocent women, children, and old people" must not be "ill-treated or killed." We have opened the French record of German atrocities at random, and we find this statement in the sworn evidence of M. Barbe of Nomeny: "Near the station I saw in the front of the Café Français, which was kept by M. Paul Marens, some German soldiers who fired at all the passers-by; they killed a child, to me unknown, which could not have been more than 2 years of age. I saw this child, clad in a red-and-white striped dress; it fell stone-dead. I also saw a woman 60 years of age killed in her garden, an invalid who had come out to get a little fresh air." They are gallant fellows, these Bavarians, aren't they? And the Kaiser asserts that God is witness of their clemency!

Fortunately the very grave charges brought against the German conduct of the campaign are supported by the written evidence of the Germans themselves. The foul massacre of Nomeny is demonstrated in all its horrors by documents duly tested and reproduced by the French Government. Here, for instance, is the written statement of Wilhelm Peters, a lieutenant of the 8th Bavarian Regiment of Infantry (Reserve): "The undersigned witnessed the following act of a Bavarian soldier, whose name he was unfortunately unable to learn in the haste and confusion: this man shot the father of a family with incredible brutality. It was my impression then, and on other occasions, that the officers at Nomeny were unable to prevent such acts. As far as I could judge, the crimes committed, which filled all the soldiers who came to Nomeny later with horror, must be attributed to abnormal brutes." Lieutenant Peters is over-sanguine. The abnormality of others is the normality of the Germans. The brutal destruction of Nomeny and its inhabitants might doubtless have been prevented by the German officers; as a fact it was the officers who gave the order to destroy, and on the usual pretext. Private Fischer, of Peters' own regiment, makes this clear in his note-book: "At 5 o'clock," he writes, "we were

ordered by the officer in command of the regiment to shoot all the male inhabitants of Nomeny," and having admitted that he and his comrades set fire to all the houses which the artillery had spared, he adds this comment, truly abnormal in one of his blood: "It is a terrible sight when helpless women and children, utterly destitute, are herded together and driven into France."

Indeed, from the fact that individual Germans protest in their letters and diaries against the vile excesses of their army, we may conclude that they act in obedience to general orders. The pictures that are presented to us by the Germans themselves of their advance through Belgium into France are hideous in their brutal intensity. The comment of Private Hans Wix, of the 78th Regiment of Infantry, is of a justice which all will commend. "The village," he writes, "and the workmen's houses have been plundered and ransacked from garret to basement. Horrible. There is really some truth in all the talk about German barbarians." There is indeed, and some day, when the belligerents have left off fighting and the neutrals are tired of piling up heaps of gold, the whole world will ring with the sordid shame of it.

So in a brief compass we have abundant proof that all the Conventions of The Hague have been trodden under foot into the blood-drenched soil of Belgium and France. "Great day of gorging," comments Rudolf Rossberg, a proud Saxon, on August 29th. "I play the piano, and we loot steadily," he boasts the next day. Schulz, a Non-Commissioned Officer of the 46th Regiment, takes a gloomier view of his excesses. "I wonder how we can have the face," he grumbles, "to rail at the excesses of the Russians, when we are behaving much worse in France; at every opportunity, on one pretext or another, we pillage and burn. But God is just and sees everything. His mills grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small." Now we have a sketch of beautiful chateaux wantonly destroyed; now the pleasant statement is entered in a German diary that "mutilation of the wounded is the order of the day."

When you set side by side the lying sentimentality of 'Der Kaiser rief,' and France's unvarnished record of German infamy, you have no difficulty in understanding the character of the adversaries arrayed against us. You see at once that the Kaiser rates his own honour as cheaply as he rates the intelligence of his countrymen. In open print he brags of his piety; he gives his army at the same time orders to murder and mutilate, to pillage and steal, to fire on the Red Cross, and to take away from civilians all rights of life and property. For the Germans thus fed upon falsehood and Sadic cruelty there can be no hope of redemption. For generations they are con-

demned to live in the outer darkness of barbarism. Civilised men cannot again take them by the hand or traffic with them in the market-place. They are soiled body and soul. The lie which they have told and lived has stained them to the very marrow of their bones. For it is not the worst lie that men tell to others — that extrudes them merely from honourable society; the worst lie is that which men tell to themselves, and from whose poison there is no cure save candid, humiliating confession.

From these documents, moreover, we may take the measure of the task which lies ahead of us. A German victory would mean the relapse of European civilisation into a far-off backward and abysm of time. The triumph of lawlessness and brutality would hang for ever like a cloud of shame over the world. Whose life would be worth living if we were all asked to applaud the Germans' brutal method of warfare, to accept for justice the lawlessness of the butchers who have made not merely a desert but a shambles of the countries through which they have passed? And the wide publication of these Teutonic infamies should have its due effect upon the minds of neutrals. Not that we expect much aid or a quickened conscience from the comfortable nations who are finding profit and interest in the tragedies of others. Fear and greed are crimes which at this moment may just be set side by side with the Germans' cruelty and licentiousness. But the French Foreign Office does well to call attention coldly to the shortcomings of those nations which, though neutral, cannot escape responsibility. "Setting aside the States actually belligerent," says the official preface, "thirty-three States at present neutral were represented at The Hague in 1907; all were witnesses to the undertakings given by Germany, and to them Germany's word was plighted: the violation of that pact affects them, therefore, all alike." Will they resent that violation? Certainly not. Don't you hear the rattle of the till?

Upon one body of men it might be thought that the conduct of the German armies might have had a salutary effect, and that body is the British Government. Alas! that body remains as supine and as well satisfied with itself as ever. Lord Haldane once said that we should never get national service until England had been "invaded once or twice." The phrase "once or twice" is a real invention in fatuity. We doubt whether three or four invasions would bring our Radical politicians to their senses. Mr Asquith does not seem yet to have discovered that England is at war. So wickedly indifferent is he that he has put off the burden of government, and has placed all the power and (as he fondly hopes) all the responsibility upon the

shoulders of the Labour Party and the Trade Unions. Imagine William Pitt in the crisis of England's fate delegating his authority to the Friends of Freedom, the silly followers of Priestley and other maniacs, who thought they might blackmail England into compliance with their fanatical ambitions merely because she was at war, and you may get some measure of Mr Asquith's dereliction! He takes refuge in public behind a rigid wall of silence. He refuses obstinately to make any statement to the House of Commons, and then unburdens his soul to the engineerers of strikes and to the ineffable Mr Ramsay Macdonald, the avowed enemy of the war. The works of Mr Ramsay Macdonald are the favourite reading of the Germans. What guarantee have we that another pamphlet, based upon the confidences of Mr Asquith, will not shortly delight the citizens of Hamburg and Berlin?

A year ago the Radical Cabinet pleaded for union, and a united support was given it. In return it was bound by honour to devote itself entirely to the conduct of the war. Yet at every step it has considered the political situation rather than the military necessities of England. It has refused either to make up its own mind or to lead the country in the essential matter of national service. The appointment of Lord Derby, a patriotic and self-sacrificing statesman, is but an artifice to postpone by six weeks a decision which the fanatical members of the Cabinet, who place a theory before the necessary defence of the country, hesitate to make. The 22, or rather 21, still sit, indomitable and divided, as though they had time, as in peace, to argue and intrigue, to gauge pressures, and measure support, to win this one or that over to a cherished opinion. It is clear to the whole world, save to the Cabinet, that twenty-one gentlemen, the most of them blameless mediocrities, are not competent to undertake the conduct of a great war. In war success depends upon quick decisions and bold hazards. We shall never disengage from a mob of twenty-one either rapidity of thought or courage in action. Here, indeed, we discover the real cause of failure. What we demand is a leader whom we can trust, and we are given twenty-one disputants, many of them by long training convinced that there is nothing in the world like the power of words.

There exists, it is true, a Committee of War, but, alas! we cannot extract much comfort from that. In the first place, its decisions are subject to the control of the Cabinet. In the second, it contains some members in whom it is not easy to repose confidence. Why, for instance, is Mr Churchill called to its counsels?

Does he attend the meetings of the Committee as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, a department which does not appear to be closely engaged, or is it perchance as a "discredited public servant," to use a phrase which he once applied himself to a distinguished statesman, that he is called to this Cabinet within a Cabinet? At any rate the existence of the War Committee cannot bring reassurance to troubled souls. It is, like many other plans and plots of the Government, merely a means of pretending that something has been done, which has no chance of accomplishment either now or in the future.

So it still seems the object of our Ministers to manage the House of Commons, not to direct the war. A pert answer which refuses information, and for the moment appears to confound the questioner, is still sure of a hand. There are those, we believe, who do not deplore Mr Tennant's facile prevarications. Even Sir Edward Grey, who has enjoyed the trust of his fellow-countrymen in an eminent degree, who has listened to such praises as have rarely been lavished upon a politician, disappoints his admirers in the very moment of crisis. Not even the thick-and-thin supporters of the Government can take much comfort in the muddle of the Balkans, and if ever our English Aristides is called "the just" again, surely he will shudder himself at the incongruity. He, too, suffers from the prevailing disease of indecision. He, too, fears above all things to make up his mind. He was afraid to risk a conjecture as to which was our friend, Greece or Bulgaria, and while he wavered he seems to have lost them both. Nor can he be acquitted of the charge of grossly bungling the question of cotton. In one point we should have been ready at the very first to risk the disapproval of neutrals. We should have declared everything that goes to the making of munitions contraband of war. For a whole year Sir Edward Grey declined to put a ban upon cotton. In August last, persuaded by agitation from outside, he was said to have taken a belated and necessary step. Our confidence was unjustified. As late as October 12 the Germans were still free to obtain the material necessary for the killing of our soldiers and the soldiers of our Allies. On that day Sir Edward Grey made the astounding admission that "raw cotton, linters, cotton waste, and cotton yarn are all contraband of war, and every possible step was taken to prevent any supplies of these commodities from reaching Germany." So much was done to allay the agitation of last summer. Meanwhile the Germans were still happy in their supplies. It was only upon October 12 that Sir Edward Grey finally made up his mind. "It is the intention

of His Majesty's Government to declare cotton piece-goods and other cotton products capable of being used in the manufacture of explosives, contraband forthwith, and to prohibit the export of such goods and products from here to neutral countries contiguous to Germany and Austria-Hungary." What is the meaning of this grim tragi-comedy? For more than a year we have cleared the seas of hostile ships, we have picked up the floating mines strewn by the Germans, in order that neutral countries might not fall behind in the quick and regular supply of cotton to Germany. And even now the new Order in Council is so vague as to be unintelligible. Vagueness of speech is a sure sign of vagueness of thought, and our Ministers are not adepts in the art of explanation. It may be recorded in passing that Sir John Simon, in attempting to suppress the night clubs, found all the resources of the English tongue inadequate for a definition, and was unable to make any distinction, in an Act of Parliament, between the Athenæum and a dancing-hall.

But none of Sir Edward Grey's indiscretions is more dangerous to the State than his admission in a public letter that he is ready to reopen the question upon which the safety of England depends now and hereafter. "Freedom of the sea," he said, "may be a very reasonable subject for discussion, definition, and agreement between nations after this war." Now there is (or should be) one subject which will never be reasonable for discussion between England and other countries, either during or after the war, and that subject is the freedom of the sea. For our sovereignty of the sea we have fought ever since we have been a nation, and we are fighting for it still. It is the one element of safety which we can oppose to the vast armaments and insolent pretensions of Germany. As long as we preserve it inviolate the victory in the end must be ours. But it is a thing which we can never surrender or even discuss, and were it not for a sorrowful memory of the Declaration of London we could not find any possible explanation for Sir Edward Grey's absurd statement. However, there it is, and the Government being questioned on its propriety, finds only the customary answer, that a discussion at this time would not be conducive to the public interest. But it will be as well to remember Sir Edward Grey's weakness after the war, and to see to it, when public debate can no longer be alleged to be a danger, that there is no tampering with the British sovereignty of the sea.

Thus it is that we look everywhere, and look in vain, for firmness of purpose and resolute action. While Sir Edward Grey speaks of the freedom of the sea, the gentlemen of the Treasury deliver ridiculous little homilies about economy. They are ridiculous

because they are obviously insincere. On the one hand we are told that silver bullets will win the war, and that we must all be prepared to pay in taxation and loans half our incomes. On the other hand we know that no attempt is made by the Government itself to ensure economy in the public services. There are reports that money is being thrown away with a careless hand on all sides. There are even rumours, which have not been disproved, of grave corruption. The Government, still with its eye on that absurd thing, the next election, is fast converting the life of the working classes into one huge war bonus. Nobody objects to high taxation. Whatever is imposed upon us we shall pay without a hint of grumbling. All we ask in exchange is that not a penny of the public money should be wasted. After all, it is the Power which can hold out longest that will win in this war of attrition; and since so much depends upon the last of our silver bullets, it is perhaps excessive to pay a boy two pounds a week for cleaning lamps in a soldiers' camp.

Thus in all departments of the Government we find the same looseness of statement, the same disinclination to act. The resignation of Sir Edward Carson, which we cordially welcome not only as a courageous protest against indecision, but as a fair hope for the future, was caused by his dislike of his colleagues' slackness and irresolution. The Balkan situation, he said in his grave and admirable statement, "with all its complications, necessitated, in my opinion, a clearly defined, well-thought-out, and decisive policy on the part of His Majesty's Government; and finding myself unable to agree in any respect with what I understood was laid down as the policy approved by His Majesty's Government, I felt that my presence in the Cabinet could not be of any use in the critical situation in which we were involved." There is not much comfort to be gained by the optimists from this pronouncement. The statesman who asks for well-thought-out, clearly defined, and decisive policy is quite right to resign if he finds it not. He could, indeed, do no less. But in resigning, and in giving that cause for resignation, he brings the heaviest possible charge against those that remain. If this is not a time for clearly defined policy, there never was such a time in the history of the Empire, and the only way of safety lies in our discovering men who, like Sir Edward Carson, understand the imperative need of decisive action, and who can inspire it in others.

That the uneasiness and distrust which we have indicated are general and profound, nobody will doubt. Wherever you go the same tale is told, and our confidence is not strengthened by the obstinate silence in which all our operations are involved. We know nothing, we are told nothing, merely because the Government clings

to office, and realises that its best chance of life is to remain behind a veil of impenetrable mystery. Were there good news to hear, we should hear it soon enough. Meanwhile we are asked to put up with the pomposity of Mr Churchill, who, having acknowledged that the enemy has seized a new initiative in the Near East, owing to "our long delays," attempts to mimic the utterance of the Younger Pitt. In truth, every word spoken, every deed done, assures us that an instant reconstruction is necessary. The country is not really lacking in energy. We do not depend in the conduct of the war upon those men of genius, those masters of strategy—Messrs M'Kenna and Runciman, Messrs Harcourt and M'Kinnon Wood. It is time to rid ourselves for ever of these stop-gaps. In Sir Edward Carson and Mr Lloyd George, in Lord Kitchener and Mr Balfour, we have the nucleus of a strong Cabinet. To them might be added Lord Derby, who already has the power without responsibility, and Lord Milner, whose wisdom and patriotism no abuse of small men can obscure. Six or seven, in place of twenty-one, could save the country from that fatal disease of indecision which at present afflicts it, and give us a sound hope that the war would be vigorously carried on and brought, with courage and energy, to a happy issue.

There is another class, besides the politicians, which has not yet discovered that England is at war. The Trade Unions are busy, as usual, with strikes. Not even Lord Haldane's two or three invasions would succeed in waking them up from their parochial sloth. The war for them is an excellent opportunity for putting on the screw. A spirited policy of high wages and war bonuses appeals to their sense of comfort irresistibly. They, at any rate, or some of them, are going to make the best they can out of their country's danger. A sad personage, named Mr J. H. Thomas, who appears to be a member of Parliament and assistant secretary to the Railwaymen's Union, and who has already gained an unhappy notoriety by a shameful speech in the House of Commons, lately announced a settlement, which, said he, "was one of the biggest ever achieved by the Trade Unions." You might have thought that the settlement was one which helped us to beat Germany, which brought England nearer to the goal of her desire. No: it was merely a matter of a war bonus. It involved another 2s. here, another 5s. there, and it stirred the unspeakable Mr Thomas to the very depth of his soul. It's fine work, striking in war time, isn't it, and threatening that if Parliament comes to a decision of which the Railwaymen's Union disapproves, they will all come out, and so destroy the only means which our Army has of trans-

port? It proves, doesn't it, that the British working man cherishes a view of patriotism which is all his own? And we are quite sure that he feels not a single little twinge of shame, when he is told that since the declaration of war there has not been a single strike in France, that there every man has thrown himself into the conflict without thought of himself or his pocket. The working man, indeed, as sketched by Mr J. H. Thomas, finds it a good thing to aim at higher wages, on threat of a strike, while his sons and brothers are fighting and dying in France. He also claims, in the moment of refusing to discharge the duties of citizenship, that he should be allowed to meddle in the government of the country. That he should ever be brought to a better state of mind seems unlikely, and we can only hope that, while we are beset without by a rancorous foe, we shall not find a more dangerous enemy within our own borders.

THE FIRST HUNDRED THOUSAND.

BY THE JUNIOR SUB.

XX. THE GATHERING OF THE EAGLES.

When this war is over, and the glory and the praise are duly assigned, particularly honourable mention should be made of the inhabitants of a certain ancient French town with a Scottish name, which lies not far behind a particularly sultry stretch of the trenches. The town is subject to shell-fire, as splintered walls and shattered windows testify; yet every shop stands open. The town, moreover, is the only considerable place in the district, and enjoys a monopoly of patronage from all the surrounding billeting areas; yet the keepers of the shops have heroically refrained from putting up their prices to any appreciable extent. This combination of courage and fair-dealing has had its reward. The town has become a local Mecca. British soldiers with an afternoon to spare and a few francs to spend come in from miles around. Mess presidents send in their mess-sergeants, and fearful and wonderful is the marketing which ensues.

In remote and rural billets catering is a simple matter. We take what we can get, and leave it at that. The following business-card, which Bobby Little once found attached to an outhouse door in one of his billets, puts the resources of a French hamlet into a nut-shell:—

HÉRE
SMOKIND ROM
BÉER
WINE { WITHE / RAID
COFFÉ
EGS

But in town the shopper has a wider range. Behold Sergeant Goffin, a true-born Londoner, with the Londoner's faculty of never being at a loss for a word, at the grocer's, purchasing comforts for our officers' mess.

"Bong jooer, Mrs Pankhurst!" he observes breezily to the plump *épicière*. This is his invariable greeting to French ladies who display any tendency to volubility — and they are many.

"Bon jour, M'sieu le Caporal!" replies the *épicière*, smiling. "M'sieu le Caporal désire?"

The sergeant allows his reduction in rank to pass unnoticed. He does not understand the French tongue, though he speaks it with great fluency and incredible success. He holds up a warning hand.

"Now, keep your 'and off the tap of the gas-meter for one minute *if* you please," he rejoins, "and let me get a word in edgeways. I want"—with great

emphasis—"vinblank one, vinrooge two, bogeys six, Dom one. Compree?"

By some miracle the smiling lady does "compree," and produces white wine, red wine, candles, and—a bottle of Benedictine! (Sergeant Goffin always names wines after the most boldly printed word upon the label. He once handed round some champagne, which he insisted on calling "a bottle of Brute").

"Combine?" is the next observation.

The *épicière* utters the series of short, sharp sibilants of which all French numerals appear to be composed. It sounds like "song-song-song." The resourceful Goffin lays down a twenty-franc note.

"Take it out of that," he says grandly.

He receives his change, and counts it with a great air of wisdom. The *épicière* breaks into a rapid recital—it sounds rather like our curate at home getting to work on *When the wicked man*—of the beauty and succulence of her other wares. Up goes Goffin's hand again.

"Na pooh!" he exclaims. "Bong jooer!" And he stumps out to the mess-cart.

"Na pooh!" is a mysterious but invaluable expression. Possibly it is derived from "Il n'y a plus." It means, "All over!" You say "Na pooh!" when you push your plate away after dinner. It also means, "Not likely!" or "Nothing doing!" By a further development it has come to mean "done for," "finished," and in extreme cases, "dead." "Poor Bill got na-poohed by a rifle-grenade yesterday," says one mourner to another.

The Oxford Dictionary of the English Language will have to be revised and enlarged when this war is over.

Meanwhile, a few doors away, a host of officers is sitting in the Café de la Terre. Cafés are as plentiful as blackberries in this, as in most other French provincial towns, and they are usually filled to overflowing with privates of the British Army heroically drinking beer upon which they know it is impossible to get intoxicated. But the proprietor of the Café de la Terre is a long-headed citizen. By the simple expedient of labelling his premises "Officers Only," and making a minimum charge of one franc per drink, he has at a single stroke ensured the presence of the *élite* and increased his profits tenfold.

Many arms of the Service are grouped round the little marble-topped tables, for the district is stiff with British troops, and promises to grow stiffer. In fact, so persistently are the eagles gathering together upon this, the edge of the fighting-line, that rumour is busier than ever. The Big Push holds redoubled sway in our thoughts. The First Hundred Thousand are well represented, for the whole Scottish Division is in the neighbourhood. Besides the glengarries there are countless flat caps—line regiments, territorials, gunners,

and sappers. The Army Service Corps is there in force, recruiting exhausted nature from the strain of dashing about the countryside in motor-cars. The R.A.M.C. is strongly represented, doubtless to test the purity of the refreshment provided. Even the Staff has torn itself away from its arduous duties for the moment, as sundry red tabs testify. In one corner sit four stout French civilians, playing a mysterious card-game.

At the very next table we find ourselves among friends. Here are Major Kemp, also Captain Blaikie. They are accompanied by Ayling, Bobby Little, and Mr Waddell. The battalion came out of trenches yesterday, and for the first time found itself in urban billets. For the moment haylofts and wash-houses are things of the dim past. We are living in real houses, sleeping in real beds, some with sheets.

To this group enters, unexpectedly, Captain Wagstaffe.

"Hallo, Wagger!" says Blaikie. "Back already?"

"Your surmise is correct," replies Wagstaffe, who has been home on leave. "I got a wire yesterday at lunch-time—in the Savoy, of all places! Every one on leave has been recalled. We were packed like herrings on the boat. Garçon, bière—the brunette kind!"

"Tell us all about London," says Ayling hungrily. "What does it look like? Tell us!"

We have been out here for the best part of five months now. Leave opened a fortnight ago, amid acclamations—only to be closed again within a few days. Wagstaffe was one of the lucky few who slipped through the blessed portals. He now sips his beer and delivers his report.

"London is much as usual. A bit rattled over Zeppelins—they have turned out even more street lamps—but nothing to signify. Country districts crawling with troops. All the officers appear to be colonels. Promotion at home is more rapid than out here. Chin, chin!" Wagstaffe buries his face in his glass mug.

"What is the general attitude," asked Mr Waddell, "towards the war?"

"Well, one's own friends are down in the dumps. Of course it's only natural, because most of them are in mourning. Our losses are much more noticeable at home than abroad, somehow. People seemed quite surprised when I told them that things out here are as right as rain, and that our troops are simply tumbling over one another, and that we don't require any comic M.P.'s sent out to cheer us up. The fact is, some people read the papers too much. At the present moment the London press is, not to put too fine a point on it, making a holy show of itself. I suppose there's some low-down political rig at the back of it all, but the whole business must be perfect jam for the Bosches in Berlin."

"What's the trouble?" enquired Major Kemp.

"Conscription, mostly. (Though why they should worry their little heads about it,

I don't know. If K. wants it we'll have it: if not, we won't; so that's that!) Both sides are trying to drag the great British Public into the scrap by the back of the neck. The Conscription crowd, with whom one would naturally side if they would play the game, seem to be out to unseat the Government as a preliminary. They support their arguments by stating that the British Army on the Western front is reduced to a few platoons, and that they are allowed to fire one shell per day. At least, that's what I gathered."

"What do the other side say?" enquired Kemp.

"Oh, their's is a very simple line of argument. They state, quite simply, that if the personal liberty of Britain's workers—that doesn't mean you and me, as you might think: we are the Overbearing Militarist Oligarchy: a worker is a man who goes on strike—they say that if the personal liberty of these sacred perishers is interfered with by the Overbearing Militarist Oligarchy aforesaid, there will be a Revolution. That's all! Oh, they're a sweet lot, the British newspaper bosses!"

"But what," enquired that earnest seeker after knowledge, Mr Waddell, "is the general attitude of the country at large upon this grave question?"

Captain Wagstaffe chuckled.

"The dear old country at large," he replied, "is its dear old self, as usual. It is not worrying one jot about Conscription, or us, or anything like that. The one topic of conversation at present is—Charlie Chaplin."

"Who is Charlie Chaplin?" enquired several voices.

Wagstaffe shook his head.

"I haven't the faintest idea," he said. "All I know is that you can't go anywhere in London without running up against him. He is It. The mention of his name in a *revue* is greeted with thunders of applause. At one place I went to, twenty young men came upon the stage at once, all got up as Charlie Chaplin."

"But who *is* he?"

"That I can't tell you. I made several attempts to find out; but whenever I asked the question people simply stared at me in amazement. I felt quite ashamed: it was plain that I ought to have known. I have a vague idea that he is some tremendous new boss whom the Government have appointed to make shells, or something. Anyhow, the great British Nation is far too much engrossed with Charles to worry about a little thing like Conscription. Still, I should like to know. I feel I have been rather unpatriotic about it all."

"I can tell you," said Bobby Little. "My servant is a great admirer of his. He is the latest cinema star. Falls off roofs, and gets run over by motors——"

"And keeps the police at bay with a fire-hose," added Wagstaffe. "That's him! I know the type. Thank you, Bobby!"

Major Kemp put down his

glass with a gentle sigh, and rose to go.

"We are a great nation," he remarked contentedly. "I was a bit anxious about things at home, but I see now there was nothing to worry about. We shall win all right. Well, I am off to the Mess. See you later, everybody!"

"Meanwhile," enquired Wagstaffe, as the party settled down again, "what is brewing here? I haven't seen the adjutant yet."

"You'll see him soon enough," replied Blaikie grimly. He glanced over his shoulder towards the four civilian card-players. They looked bourgeois enough and patriotic enough, but it is wise to take no risks in a café, as a printed notice upon the wall, signed by the Provost-Marshal, was careful to point out. "Come for a stroll," he said.

Presently the two captains found themselves in a shady boulevard, leading to the outskirts of the town. Darkness was falling, and presently would be intense; for lights are taboo in the neighbourhood of the firing-line.

"Have we finished that new trench in front of our wire?" asked Wagstaffe.

"Yes. It is the best thing we have done yet. Divisional Headquarters are rightly pleased about it."

Blaikie gave details. The order had gone forth that a new trench was to be constructed in front of our present line—a hundred yards in front. Accordingly, when night fell, two hundred unconcerned heroes went forth, under their subalterns, and, squatting down in line along a white tape (laid earlier in the evening by our imperturbable friends, Lieutenants Box and Cox, of the Royal Engineers), proceeded to dig the trench. Thirty yards ahead of them, facing the curious eyes of countless Bosches, lay a covering party in extended order, ready to repel a rush. Hour by hour the work went on—skilfully, silently. On these occasions it is impossible to say what will happen. The enemy knows we are there: he can see us quite plainly. But he has his own night-work to do, and if he interferes with us he knows that our machine-guns will interfere with him. So, provided that our labours are conducted in a manner which is neither ostentatious nor contemptuous—that is to say, provided we do not talk, whistle, or smoke—he leaves us more or less alone.

But this particular task was not accomplished without loss: it was too obviously important. Several times the German machine-guns sputtered into flame, and each time the stretcher-bearers were called upon to do their duty. Yet the work went on to its accomplishment, without question, without slackening. The men were nearly all experts: they had handled pick and shovel from boyhood. Soldiers of the line would have worked quite as hard, maybe, but they would have taken twice as long. But these dour sons of Scotland worked like giants—

trained giants. In four nights the trench, with traverses and approaches, was complete. The men who had made it fell back to their dug-outs, and shortly afterwards to their billets—there to spend the few odd francs which their separation allotments had left them upon extremely hard-earned glasses of extremely small beer.

At home, several thousand patriotic Welshmen, fellows of the same craft were upholding the dignity of Labour, and the reputation of the British Nation, by going out on strike for a further increase of pay — an increase which they knew a helpless Government would grant them. It was one of the strangest contrasts that the world has ever seen. But the explanation thereof, as proffered by Private Mucklewame, was quite simple and eminently sound.

"All the decent lads," he observed briefly, "are oot here."

"Good work!" said Wagstaffe, when Blaikie's tale was told. "What is the new trench for, exactly?"

Blaikie told him.

"Tell me more!" urged Wagstaffe, deeply interested.

Blaikie's statement cannot be set down here, though the substance of it may be common property to-day. When he had finished Wagstaffe whistled softly.

"And it's to be the day after to-morrow?" he said.

"Yes, if all goes well."

It was quite dark now. The horizon was brilliantly lit by the flashes of big guns, and a continuous roar came throbbing through the soft autumn darkness.

"If this thing goes with a click, as it ought to do," said Wagstaffe, "it will be the biggest thing that ever happened — bigger even than Charlie Chaplin."

"Yes—*if!*" assented the cautious Blaikie.

"It's a tremendous opportunity for our section of 'K (1),'" continued Wagstaffe. "We shall have a chance of making history over this, old man."

"Whatever we make—history or a bloomer—we'll do our level best," replied Blaikie. "At least, I hope 'A' Company will."

Then suddenly his reserved, undemonstrative Scottish tongue found utterance.

"Scotland for Ever!" he cried softly.

XXI. THE BATTLE OF THE SLAG-HEAPS.

"Half-past two, and a cold morning, sir."

Thus Bobby Little's servant, rousing his employer from uneasy slumber under the open sky, in a newly constructed trench running parallel to and in rear of the permanent trench-line.

Bobby sat up, and peering at his luminous wrist-watch, morosely acquiesced in his

menial's gruesome statement. But he cheered up at the next intimation.

"Breakfast is ready, sir."

Tea and bacon are always tea and bacon, even in the gross darkness and mental tension which precede a Big Push. Presently various humped figures in greatcoats, gathered in the open ditch which did duty for Officers' Mess, broke into spasmodic conversation—conversation rendered even more spasmodic by the almost ceaseless roar of guns. There were guns all round us—rank upon rank: to judge by the noise, you would have said tier upon tier as well. Half-a-mile ahead, upon the face of a gentle slope, a sequence of flames would spout from the ground, and a storm of shells go whistling on their way. No sooner had this happened than there would come a shattering roar from the ground beneath our feet, and a heavy battery, concealed in a hedge fifty yards to our front, would launch its contribution. Farther back lay heavier batteries still, and beyond that batteries so powerful and so distant that one heard the shell pass before the report arrived. One of these monsters, coming apparently from infinity and bound for the back of beyond, lumbered wearily over the heads of 'A' Company, partaking of breakfast.

Private Mucklewame paused in the act of raising his canteen to his lips.

"There's Wullie awa' for a walk!" he observed.

Considering that they were upon the eve of an epoch-making combat, the regiment were disappointingly placid.

In the Officers' Mess the prevailing note was neither lust of battle nor fear of death: it was merely that ordinary snappishness which is induced by early rising and uncomfortable surroundings.

"It's going to rain, too," grumbled Major Kemp.

At this moment the Colonel arrived, with final instructions from the Brigadier.

"We move off at a quarter to four," he said, "up Fountain Alley and Scottish Trench, into Central Boyau"—"boyau" is the name which is given to a communication-trench in trenches which, like those in front of us, are of French extraction—"and so over the parapet. There we extend, as arranged, into lines of half-companies, and go at 'em, making Douvrin our objective, and keeping the Hohenzollern and Fosse Eight upon our left.

Fosse Eight is a mighty waste-heap, such as you may behold anywhere along the railway in the colliery districts between Glasgow and Edinburgh. The official map calls such an eminence a Fosse; the Royal Engineers call it a Dump; Operation Orders call it a Slag-Heap; experts like Ogg and Hogg (who ought to know if any one does) call it a Bing. From this distance, two miles away, the Fosse looks as big as North Berwick Law. It is one of the many scattered about this district, all carefully numbered by the Ordnance. There are others,

again, towards Hulluch and Loos. Number Eight has been the object of pressing attentions on the part of our big guns ever since the bombardment began, three weeks ago; but it still stands up —gaunt, grim, and defiant —against the eastern sky. Whether any one is left alive upon it, or in it, is another question. We shall have cause to remember Fosse Eight before this fight is over.

The Hohenzollern Redoubt, on the other hand, is a most inconspicuous object, but a very important factor in the present situation. It has been thrust forward from the Bosche lines to within a hundred yards of our own—a great promontory, a maze of trenches, machine-gun emplacements, and barbed wire, all flush with or under the ground, and terribly difficult to cripple by shell-fire. It has been a source of great exasperation to us — a starting-point for saps, mines, and bombing parties. As already stated, this mighty fortress has been christened by its constructors, the Hohenzollern. It is attached to its parent trench-line by two communicating trenches, which the British Army, not to be outdone in reverence to the most august of dynasties, have named Big and Little Willie respectively.

A struggling dawn breaks, bringing with it promise of rain, and the regiment begins to marshal in the trench called Fountain Alley, along which it is to wind, snake-like, in the wake of the preceding troops, until it debouches over the parapet, a full mile away, and extends into line.

Presently the order is given to move off, and the snake begins to writhe. Progress is steady, but not exhilarating. We have several battalions of the Division in front of us (which Bobby Little resents as a personal affront), but have been assured that we shall see all the fighting we want. The situation appears to be that owing to the terrific artillery bombardment the attacking force will meet with little or no opposition in the German front-line trenches; or second line, for that matter.

"The whole Division," explains Captain Wagstaffe to Bobby Little, "should be able to get up into some sort of formation about the Bosche third line before any real fighting begins; so it does not very much matter whether we start first or fiftieth in the procession." Captain Wagstaffe showed himself an accurate prophet.

We move on. At one point we pass through a howitzer battery, where dishevelled gentlemen give us a friendly wave of the hand. Others, not professionally engaged for the moment, sit unconcernedly in the ditch with their backs to the proceedings, frying bacon. This is their busy hour.

Presently the pace grows even slower, and finally we stop altogether. Another battalion has cut in ahead of us, and we must perforce wait, snapping our fingers with im-

patience, like theatre-goers in a Piccadilly block, whose taxis have been held up by the traffic debouching from Berkeley Street.

"Luckily the curtain doesn't rise till five-fifty," observes Captain Wagstaffe.

We move on again at last, and find ourselves in Central Boyau, getting near the heart of things. Suddenly we are conscious of an overpowering sense of relief. Our guns have ceased firing. For the first time for three days and nights there is peace.

Captain Wagstaffe looks at his watch.

"That means that our first line are going over the parapet," he says. "Punctual, too! The gunners have stopped to put up their sights and lengthen their fuses. We ought to be fairly in it in half an hour."

But this proves to be an under-estimate. There are mysterious and maddening stoppages — maddening, because in communication-trench stoppages it is quite impossible to find out what is the matter. Furious messages begin to arrive from the rear. The original form of enquiry was probably something like this: "Major Kemp would like to know the cause of the delay." As transmitted sonorously from mouth to mouth by the rank and file it finally arrives (if it ever arrives at all) in some such words as: "Pass doon, what for is this (asterisk, obelus) wait?" But as no answer is ever passed back it does not much matter.

The righteous indignation of Major Kemp, who is situated somewhere about the middle of the procession, reaches its culminating point when, with much struggling and pushing and hopeless jamming, a stretcher carrying a wounded man is borne down the crowded trench on its way to the rear. The Major delivers himself. "This is perfectly monstrous! You stretcher-bearers will kill that poor chap if you try to drag him down here. There is a specially constructed road to the dressing-station over there—Bart's Alley, it is called. We cannot have up-and-down traffic jumbled together like this. For heaven's sake, Waddell, pass up word to the C.O. that it is mistaken kindness to allow these fellows down here. He *must* send them back."

Waddell volunteers to climb out of the trench and go forward with a message. But this the Major will not allow. "Your platoon will require a leader presently," he mentions. "We'll try the effect of a note."

The note is passed up, and anon an answer comes back to the effect that no wounded have been allowed down from the head of the column. They must be getting in by a side-track somewhere. The Major groans, but can do nothing.

Presently there is a fresh block.

"What is it this time?" enquires the afflicted Kemp. "More wounded, or are we being photographed?"

The answer races joyously down the line:—

"Gairman prisoners, sirr—seeventy of them!"

This time the Major acts with promptness and decision.

"Prisoners? No, they *don't!* Pass up word from me that the whole boiling are to be hoisted on to the parapet, with their escort, and made to walk above ground."

The order goes forward. Presently our hearts are rejoiced by an exhilarating sight. Across the field through which our trench winds comes a body of men, running rapidly, encouraged to further fleetness of foot by desultory shrapnel and stray bullets. They wear grey-green uniform, and flat, muffin-shaped caps. They have no arms or equipment: some are slightly wounded. In front of this contingent, running even more rapidly, are their escort—some dozen brawny Highlanders, armed to the teeth. But the prisoners exhibit no desire to take advantage of this unusual order of things. Their one ambition in life appears to be to put as large a space as possible between themselves and their late comrades-in-arms, and, if possible, overtake their captors.

Some of them find time to grin, and wave their hands to us. One addresses the scandalised M'Slattery as "Kamarad!" "No more dis war for me!" cries another, with unfeigned satisfaction.

After this our progress is more rapid. As we near the front line, the enemy's shrapnel reaps its harvest even in our deep trench. More than once we pass a wounded man, hoisted on to the parapet to wait for first-aid. More than once we step over some poor fellow for whom no first-aid will avail.

Five minutes later we reach the parapet—that immovable rampart over which we have peeped so often and so cautiously with our periscopes—and clamber up a sandbag staircase on to the summit. We note that our barbed wire has all been cut away, and that another battalion, already extended into line, is advancing fifty yards ahead of us. Bullets are pinging through the air, but the guns are once more silent. Possibly they are altering their position. Dotted about upon the flat ground before us lie many kilted figures, strangely still, in uncomfortable attitudes.

A mile or so away upon our right we can see two towers—pit-head towers—standing side by side. They mark the village of Loos, where another Scottish Division is leading the attack. To the right of Loos again, for miles and miles and miles, we know that wave upon wave of impetuous French soldiers are breaking in a tempest over the shattered German trenches. Indeed, we conjecture that down there, upon our right, is where the Biggest Push of all is taking place. Our duty is to get forward if we can, but before everything to engage as many German troops and guns as possible. Even if we fight for a week or more, and only hold our own, we shall have done the greater part of what was required of

us. But we hope to do more than that.

Upon our left lies the Hohenzollern. It is silent; so we know that it has been captured. Beyond that, upon our left front, looms Fosse Eight, still surmounted by its battered shaft-tower. Right ahead, peeping over a low ridge, is a church steeple, with a clock-face in it. That is our objective.

Next moment we have deployed into extended order, and step out, to play our little part in the great Battle of the Slag-Heaps.

II.

Twenty-four hours later, a little group of officers sat in a roomy dug-out. Major Kemp was there, with his head upon the plank table, fast asleep. Bobby Little, who had neither eaten or slept since the previous dawn, was nibbling chocolate, and shaking as if with ague. He had gone through a good deal. Waddell sat opposite to him, stolidly devouring bully-beef out of a tin with his fingers. Ayling reclined upon the floor, mechanically adjusting a machine-gun lock, which he had taken from his haversack. Captain Wagstaffe was making cocoa over a Tommy's cooker. He looked less the worse for wear than the others, but could hardly have been described as spruce in appearance. The whole party were splashed with mud and soaked to the skin, for it had rained hard during the greater part of the night. They were all sick for want of food and sleep. Moreover, all had seen a good deal. It was Sunday morning.

Presently Wagstaffe completed his culinary arrangements, and poured out the cocoa into some aluminium cups. He touched Major Kemp on the shoulder.

"Have some of this, Major," he said.

The burly Kemp roused himself and took the proffered cup gratefully. Then, looking round, he said:—

"Hallo, Ayling! You arrived? Whereabouts in the line were you?"

"I got cut off from the Battalion in the advance up Central Boyau, sir," said Ayling. "Everybody had disappeared by the time I got the machine-guns over the parapet. However, knowing the objective, I pushed on towards the Church Tower."

"How did you enjoy yourself passing Fosse Eight?" enquired Captain Wagstaffe.

"Thank you, we got a dose of our own medicine—machine-gun fire, in enfilade. It was beastly."

"We also noticed it," Wagstaffe intimated. "That was where poor Sinclair got knocked out. What did you do?"

"I signalled to the men to lie flat for a bit, and I did the same. I did not know that it was possible for a

human being to lie as flat as I lay during that quarter of an hour. But it was no good. The guns must have been high up on the Fosse: they had excellent command. The bullets simply greased all round us. I could feel them almost combing out my hair!"

"What were your sensations, *exactly?*" asked Kemp.

"I felt just as if an invisible person were tickling me," replied Ayling, with feeling.

"So did I," said Kemp. "Go on."

"I heard one of my men cry out that he was hit," continued Ayling, "and I came to the conclusion that we would have a better chance as moving targets than as fixed; so I passed the word to get up and move forward steadily, in single file. Ultimately we struck a stray communication-trench, into which we descended with as much dignity as possible. It led us into some quarries."

"Off our line altogether."

"So I learned from two Companies of an English regiment which were there, acting as reserve to a Brigade which was scrapping somewhere in the direction of Hulluch; so I realised that we had worked too far to the right. We moved out of the quarries and struck over half-left, and ultimately found the Battalion, a very long way ahead, in what I took to be a Bosche third-line trench, facing east."

"Right! Fosse Trench," said Kemp. "You remember it on the map?"

"Yes, I do now," said Ayling. "Well, I planted myself on the right flank of the Battalion with two guns, and sent Sergeant Killick along with the other two to the left. You know the rest."

"I'm not sure that I do," said the Major. "We were packed so tight in that blooming trench that it was quite impossible to move about, and I only saw what was going on close around me. Did you get much machine-gun practice?"

"A fair amount, sir," replied Ayling, with professional satisfaction. "There was a lot of firing from our right front, so I combed out all the bushes and house-fronts I could see; and presently the firing died down, but not before I had had one gun put out of action with a bullet through the barrel-casing. After dark things were fairly quiet, except for constant alarms, until the order came to move back to the next trench."

Major Kemp's fist came down upon the plank table.

"Move back!" he exclaimed angrily. "Just so!" To capture Fosse Trench, hold it all day and half the night, and then be compelled to move back, simply because we had pushed so far ahead of any other Division that we had no support on either flank! It was tough — rotten — hellish! Excuse my exuberance. You all right, Wagstaffe?"

"Wonderful, considering," replied Wagstaffe. "I was mildly gassed by a lachrymous shell about two o'clock this

morning; but nothing to signify."

"Did your respirator work?"

"I found that in the heat of the moment I had mislaid it."

"What did you do?"

"I climbed on to the parapet and sat there. It seemed the healthiest spot under the circumstance: anyhow, the air was pure. When I recovered I got down. What happened to 'A,' Bobby? I heard rumours, but hoped——"

He hesitated.

"Go on," he said abruptly; and Bobby, more composed now, told his tale.

"A" Company, it appeared, had found themselves clinging grimly to the section of Fosse Trench which they had captured, with their left flank entirely in the air. Presently came an order. Further forward still, half-right, another isolated trench was being held by a portion of the Highland Brigade. These were suffering cruelly, for the German artillery had the range to a nicety, and convenient sapheads gave the German bombers easy access to their flanks. It is more than likely that this very trench had been constructed expressly for the inveiglement of a too successful attacking party. Certainly no troops could live in it for long. "A" Company were to go forward and support.

Captain Blaikie, passing word to his men to be ready, turned to Bobby.

"I'm a morose, dour, monosyllabic Scot, Bobby," he said; "but this sort of thing bucks me up."

Next moment he was over the parapet, and away, followed by his Company. In that long, steadily-advancing line were many of our friends. Mucklewame was there, panting heavily, and cannily commending his soul to Providence. Messrs Ogg and Hogg were there, shoulder to shoulder. M'Ostrich, the Ulster visionary, was there, six paces ahead of any other man, crooning some Ironside canticle to himself. Next behind him came the reformed revolutionary, M'Slattery.

Straightway the enemy observed the oncoming reinforcements, and shrapnel began to fly. The men pressed on, at a steady double now. M'Ostrich was the first to go down. Game to the last, he waved encouragement to his mates with a failing arm as they passed over his body.

"Come along, boys!" cried Captain Blaikie, suddenly eloquent. "There is the trench! The other lads are waiting for you. Come along! Charge!"

The men needed no further bidding. They came on—with a ragged cheer—and assuredly would have arrived, but for one thing. Suddenly they faltered, and stopped dead.

Captain Blaikie turned to his faithful subaltern, panting behind him.

"We are done in, Bobby," he said. "Look! Wire!"

He was right. This particular trench, it was true, was occupied by our friends; but it had been constructed in the first instance for the use of our enemies. Consequently it was

wired, and heavily wired, upon the side facing the British advance.

Captain Blaikie, directing operations with a walking-stick as if the whole affair were an Aldershot field-day, signalled to the Company to lie down, and began to unbutton a leather pouch in his belt.

"You too, Bobby," he said; "and don't dare to move a muscle until you get the order!"

He strolled forward, pliers in hand, and began methodically to cut a passage, strand by strand, through the forest of wire.

Then it was that invisible machine-guns opened, and a very gallant officer and Scotsman fell dead upon the field of honour.

Half an hour later, "A" Company, having expended all their ammunition and gained never a yard, fell back upon the rest of the Battalion. Including Bobby Little (who seemed to bear a charmed life), they did not represent the strength of a platoon.

"I wonder what they will do with us next," remarked Mr Waddell, who had finished his bully.

"If they have any sense of decency," said Major Kemp, "they will send us back to rest a bit, and put another Division in. We have opened the ball and done a lot of dirty work for them, and have lost a lot of men and officers. Bed for me, please!"

"I should be more inclined to agree with you, Major," said Wagstaffe, "if only we had a bit more to show for our losses."

"We haven't done so badly," replied Kemp, who was growing more cheerful under the influence of hot cocoa. "We have got the Hohenzollern, and the Bosche first line at least, and probably Fosse Eight. On the right I hear we have taken Loos. That's not bad for a start. I have not the slightest doubt that there will be a heavy counter-attack, which we shall repel. After that we shall attack again, and gain more ground, or at least keep the Bosche exceedingly busy holding on. That is our allotted task in this entertainment—to go on hammering the Hun, occupying his attention and using up his reserves, regardless of whether we gain ground or lose it, while our French pals on the right are pushing him off the map. At least, that is my theory: I don't pretend to be in touch with the official mind. This battle will probably go on for a week or more, over practically the same ground. It will be dreadful for the wounded, but even if we only hold on to what we have gained already, we are the winners. Still, I wish we could have consolidated Fosse Trench before going to bed."

At this moment the Colonel, stooping low in the tiny doorway, entered the dug-out, followed by the Adjutant. He bade his supporters good-morning.

"I'm glad to find that you

fellows have been able to give your men a meal," he said. "It was capital work getting the ration-carts up so far last night."

"Any news, Colonel?" asked Major Kemp.

"Most decidedly. It seems that the enemy have evacuated Fosse Trench again. Nobody quite knows why: a sudden attack of cold feet, probably. Our people command their position from Fosse Eight, on their left rear, so I don't altogether blame them. Whoever holds Fosse Eight holds Fosse Trench. However, the long and short of it all is that the Brigade are to go forward again this evening, and reoccupy Fosse Trench. Meanwhile, we consolidate things here."

Major Kemp sighed.

"Bed indefinitely postponed!" he remarked resignedly.

III.

By midnight on the same Sunday the Battalion, now far under its original strength, had re-entered the scene of yesterday's long struggle, filing thither under the stars, by a deserted and ghostly German *boyau* nearly ten feet deep. Fosse Trench erred in the opposite direction. It was not much more than four feet in depth; the chalky parapet could by no stretch of imagination be described as bullet-proof; dug-outs and communication-trenches were non-existent. On our left the trench-line was continued by the troops of another Division: on our right lay another battalion of our own brigade.

"If the line has been made really continuous this time," observed the Colonel, "we should be as safe as houses. Wonderful fellows, these sappers! They have wired almost our whole front already. I wish they had had time to do it on our left as well."

Within the next few hours all defensive preparations possible in the time had been completed, and our attendant angels, most effectively disguised as Royal Engineers, had flitted away, leaving us to wait for Monday morning—and Brother Bosche.

With the dawn our eyes, which had known no sleep since Friday night, peered rheumily out over the whitening landscape.

To our front the ground stretched smooth and level for two hundred yards; then fell gently away, leaving a clearly defined skyline. Beyond the skyline rose houses, of which we could descry only the roofs and upper windows.

"That must be either Haisnes or Douvrin," said Major Kemp. "We are much farther to the left than we were yesterday. By the way, *was* it yesterday?"

"The day before yesterday, sir," the ever-ready Waddell informed him.

"Never mind; to-day's the day, anyhow. And it's going

to be a busy day, too. The fact is, we are in a tight place, and all through doing too well. We have again penetrated so much farther forward than any one else in our neighbourhood that we *may* have to fall back a bit. But I hope not. We have a big stake, Waddell. If we can hold on to this position until the others make good upon our right and left, we shall have reclaimed a clear mile of the soil of France, my son." The Major swept the horizon with his glasses. "Let me see: that is probably Hulluch away on our right front: the Loos towers must be in line with us on our extreme right, but we can't see them for those hillocks. There is our old friend Fosse Eight towering over us on our left rear. I don't know anything about the ground on our absolute left, but so long as that flathead regiment hold on to their trench, we can't go far wrong. Waddell, I don't like those cottages on our left front. They block the view, and also spell machine-guns. I see one or two very suggestive loopholes in those red-tiled roofs. Go and draw Ayling's attention to them. A little preliminary *strafing* will do them no harm."

Five minutes later one of Ayling's machine-guns spoke out, and a cascade of tiles came sliding down the roofs of the offending cottages.

"That will tickle them up, if they have any guns set up on those rafters," observed the Major, with ghoulish satisfaction. "I wonder if Brer Bosche is going to attack. I hope he does. There is only one thing I am afraid of, and that is that there may be some odd saps or trenches running out towards us, especially on our flanks. If so, we shall have some close work with bombs—a most ungentlemanly method of warfare. Let us pray for a straightforward frontal attack."

But Brer Bosche had other cards to play first. Suddenly, out of nowhere, the air was filled with "whizz-bang" shells, moving in a lightning procession which lasted nearly half an hour. Most of these plastered the already scarred countenance of Fosse Eight: others fell shorter and demolished our parapet. When the tempest ceased, as suddenly as it began, the number of casualties in the crowded trench was considerable. But there was little time to attend to the wounded. Already the word was running down the line:—

"Look out to your front!"

Sure enough, over the skyline, two hundred yards away, grey figures were appearing—not in battalions, but tentatively, in twos and threes. Next moment a storm of rapid rifle-fire broke from the trench. The grey figures turned and ran. Some disappeared over the horizon, others dropped flat, others simply curled up and withered. In three minutes solitude reigned again, and the firing ceased.

"Well, that's that!" observed Captain Wagstaffe to

Bobby Little, upon the right of the Battalion line. "The Bosche has 'bethought himself and went,' as the poet says. Now he knows we are here, and have brought our arquebuses with us. He will try something more ikey next time. Talking of time, what about breakfast? When was our last meal, Bobby?"

"Haven't the vaguest notion," said Bobby sleepily.

"Well, it's about breakfast-time now. Have a bit of chocolate? It is all I have."

It was eight o'clock, and perfect silence reigned. All down the line men, infinitely grubby, were producing still grubbier fragments of bully-beef and biscuit from their persons. For an hour, squatting upon the sodden floor of the trench—it was raining yet again—the unappetising, intermittent meal proceeded.

Then——

"Hallo!" exclaimed Bobby with a jerk (for he was beginning to nod); "what was that on our right?"

"I'm afraid," replied Wagstaffe, "that it was bombs. It was right in this trench, too, about a hundred yards along. There must be a sap leading up there, for the bombers certainly have not advanced overground. I've been looking out for them since stand-to. Who is this anxious gentleman?"

A subaltern of the battalion on our right was forcing his way along the trench. He addressed Wagstaffe.

"We are having a pretty bad time with Bosche bombers on our right, sir," he said. "Will you send us down all the bombs you can spare?"

Wagstaffe hoisted himself upon the parapet.

"I will see our C.O. at once," he replied, and departed at the double. It was a risky proceeding, for German bullets promptly appeared in close attendance; but he saved a good five minutes on his journey to Battalion Headquarters at the other end of the trench.

Presently the bombs began to arrive, passed from hand to hand. Wagstaffe returned, this time along the trench.

"We shall have a tough fight for it," he said. "The Bosche bombers know their business, and probably have more bombs than we have. But those boys on our right seem to be keeping their end up."

"Can't *we* do anything?" asked Bobby feverishly.

"Nothing—unless the enemy succeed in working right down here; in which case we shall take our turn of getting it in the neck—or giving it! I fancy old Ayling and his pop-gun will have a word to say, if he can find a nice straight bit of trench. All we can do for the present is to keep a sharp look-out in front. I have no doubt they will attack in force when the right moment comes."

For close on three hours the bomb-fight went on. Little could be seen, for the struggle was all taking place upon the extreme right; but the sounds of conflict were plain enough. More bombs were passed up, and yet more; men, some cruelly torn, were passed down.

Then a signal-sergeant doubled up across country from somewhere in rear, paying out wire, and presently the word went forth that we were in touch with the Artillery. Directly after, sure enough, came the blessed sound and sight of British shrapnel bursting over our right front.

"That won't stop the present crowd," said Wagstaffe, "but it may prevent their reinforcements from coming up. We are holding our own, Bobby. What's that, Sergeant?"

"The Commanding Officer, sirr," announced Sergeant Carfrae, "has just passed up that we are to keep a sharp look-out to our left. They've commenced for to bomb the English regiment now."

"Golly, both flanks! This is getting a trifle steep," remarked Wagstaffe.

Detonations could now be distinctly heard upon the left.

"If they succeed in getting round behind us," said Wagstaffe in a low voice to Bobby, "we shall have to fall back a bit, into line with the rest of the advance. Only a few hundred yards, but it means a lot to *us!*"

"It hasn't happened yet," said Bobby stoutly.

Captain Wagstaffe knew better. His more experienced eye and ear had detected the fact that the position of the regiment upon the left was already turned. But he said nothing.

Presently the tall figure of the Colonel was seen, advancing in leisurely fashion along the trench, stopping here and there to exchange a word with a private or a sergeant.

"The regiment on the left may have to fall back, men," he was saying. "We, of course, will stand fast and cover their retirement."

This most characteristic announcement was received with a matter-of-fact "Varra good, sir," from its recipients, and the Colonel passed on to where the two officers were standing.

"Hallo, Wagstaffe," he said; "good-morning! We shall get some very pretty shooting presently. The enemy are massing on our left front, down behind those cottages. How are things going on our right?"

"They are holding their own, sir."

"Good! Just tell Ayling to get his guns trained. But doubtless he has done so already. I must get back to the other flank."

And back to the danger-spot our C.O. passed—an upright, gallant figure, saying little, exhorting not at all, but instilling confidence and cheerfulness by his very presence.

Half-way along the trench he encountered Major Kemp.

"How are things on the left, sir?" was the Major's *sotto voce* enquiry.

"Not too good. Our position is turned. We have been promised reinforcements, but I doubt if they can get up in time. Of course, when it comes to falling back, this regiment goes last."

"Of course, sir."

IV.

Highlanders! Four hundred yards! At the enemy advancing half-left, rapid fire!

Twenty minutes had passed. The regiment still stood immovable, though its left flank was now utterly exposed. All eyes and rifles were fixed upon the cluster of cottages. Through the gaps that lay between these could be discerned the advance of the German infantry — line upon line. Each time one of these lines passed a gap the rifles rang out and Ayling's remaining machine-gun uttered joyous barks. Still the enemy advanced. His shrapnel was bursting overhead; bullets were whistling from nowhere; for the attack in force was now being pressed home in earnest.

The deserted trench upon our left ran right through the cottages, and this restricted our view. No hostile bombers could be seen; it was evident that they had done their bit and handed on the conduct of affairs to others. Behind the shelter of the cottages the infantry were making a safe detour, and were bound, unless something unexpected happened, to get round behind us.

"They'll be firing from our rear in a minute," said Kemp between his teeth. "Lochgair, order your platoon to face about and be ready to fire over the parados."

Young Lochgair's method of executing this command was characteristically thorough. He climbed in leisurely fashion upon the parados; and standing there, with all his six-foot-three in full view, issued his orders.

"Face this way, boys! Keep your eyes on that group of buildings just behind the empty trench, in below the Fosse. You'll get some target practice presently. Don't go and forget that you are the straightest-shooting platoon in the Company. There they are" —he pointed with his stick— "lots of them—coming through that gap in the wall! Now then, rapid fire, and let them have it! Oh, well done, boys! Good shooting! Very good! Very good ind——"

He stopped suddenly, swayed, and toppled back into the trench. Major Kemp caught him in his arms, and laid him gently upon the chalky floor. There was nothing more to be done. Young Lochgair had given his platoon their target, and the platoon were now firing steadily upon the same. He closed his eyes and sighed, like a tired child.

"Carry on, Major!" he murmured faintly. "I'm all right."

So died the simple-hearted, valiant enthusiast whom we had christened Othello.

The entire regiment — what was left of it—was now firing over the back of the trench; for the wily Teuton had risked no frontal attack, seeing that he could gain all his ends from

the left flank. Despite vigorous rifle-fire and the continuous maledictions of the machine-gun, the enemy were now pouring through the cottages behind the trench. Many grey figures began to climb up the face of Fosse Eight, where apparently there was none to say them nay.

"We shall have a cheery walk back, I *don't* think!" murmured Wagstaffe.

He was right. Presently a withering fire was opened from the summit of the Fosse, which soon began to take effect in the exiguous and ill-protected trench.

"The Colonel is wounded, sir," reported the Sergeant-Major to Major Kemp.

"Badly?"

"Yes, sir."

Kemp looked round him. The regiment was now alone in the trench, for the gallant company upon their right had been battered almost out of existence.

"We can do no more good by staying here any longer," said the Major. "We have done our little bit. I think it is a case of 'Home, John!' Tell off a party to bring in the C.O., Sergeant-Major."

Then he passed the order.

"Highlanders, retire to the trenches behind, by Companies, beginning from the right."

"Whatever we may think of the Bosche as a gentleman," mused that indomitable philosopher, Captain Wagstaffe, as he doubled stolidly rearward behind his Company, "there is no denying his bravery as a soldier or his skill in co-ordinating an attack. It's positively uncanny, the way his artillery supports his infantry. (Hallo, that was a near one!) This enfilade fire from the Fosse is most unpleasant. (I fancy that one went through my kilt.) Steady there, on the left: don't bunch, whatever you do! Thank heaven, there's the next line of trenches, fully manned. And thank God, there's that boy Bobby tumbling in unhurt!"

V.

So ended our share in the Big Push. It was a very small episode, spread over quite a short period, in one of the biggest and longest battles in the history of the world. It would have been easy to select a more showy episode, but hard to find a better illustration of the character of the men who took part in it. The battle which began upon that grey September morning has been raging, as I write, for nearly three weeks. It still surges backwards and forwards over the same stricken mile of ground; and the end is not yet. But the Hun is being steadily beaten to earth. (Only yesterday, in one brief furious counter-attack, he lost eight thousand killed.) When the final advance comes, as come it must, and our victorious line sweeps forward, it

will pass over two narrow, ill-constructed, shell-torn trenches. In and around those trenches will be found the bodies of men—Jocks, and Jimmies, and Sandies, and Andies—clad in the uniform of almost every Scottish regiment. That assemblage of mute, glorious witnesses marks the point reached, during the first few hours of the first day's fighting, by the Scottish Division of "K (1)." *Molliter ossa cubent.*

There is little more to add to the record of those three days. For yet another night we carried on—repelling counter-attacks, securing the Hohenzollern, making sorties out of Big Willie, or manning the original front-line parapet against eventualities. As is inevitable in a fight of these proportions, whole brigades were mingled together, and unexpected leaders arose to take the place of those who had fallen. Many a stout piece of work was done that night by mixed bands of kilties, flat-heads, and even cyclists, marshalled in a captured German trench and shepherded by a junior subaltern.

Finally, about midnight, came the blessed order that fresh troops were coming up to continue the attack, and that we were to be extricated from the *mêlée* and sent back to rest. And so, after a participation in the battle of some seventy-two hours, our battered Division came out—to sleep the sleep of utter exhaustion in dug-outs behind the railway line, and to receive, upon waking, the thanks of its corps commander.

VI.

And here I propose (for a time, at least) to take leave of The First Hundred Thousand. Some day, if Providence wills, the tale shall be resumed; and you shall hear how Major Kemp, Captain Wagstaffe, Ayling, and Bobby Little, assisted by such veterans as Corporal Mucklewame, built up the regiment, with copious drafts and a fresh batch of subalterns, to its former strength.

But the title of the story will have to be changed. In the hearts of those who drilled them, reasoned with them, sometimes almost wept over them, and ultimately fought shoulder to shoulder with them, the sturdy, valiant legions, whose humorously-pathetic career you have followed so patiently for fifteen months, will always be First; but alas! they are no longer The Hundred Thousand.

So we will leave them, as is most justly due, in sole possession of their proud title.

Printed by William Blackwood and Sons.

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCII. DECEMBER 1915. Vol. CXCVIII.

DOING HER BIT.

AN ACCOUNT OF A CRUISER'S OPERATIONS IN THE CAMEROONS.

BY GUNS. Q.F.C.

"Telegram on the pier for Commanding Officer of H.M.S. *Cumberland.*"

Thus laconically did we get our first intimation that the even tenor of our way was to be interrupted.

The ship, lying peacefully off Cowes during the week preceding the famous Cowes Week, had been painted and gilded, to harmonise better with the numerous yachts berthed in front of the Royal Yacht Squadron Grounds, and most of the officers who could get away were dining with friends at the hotels or with brother officers at the Naval College.

The steamboat sped shorewards, and on returning the coxswain handed the orange-coloured missive to the officer of the watch, who dived below to the captain.

Events in Europe during the week had led us to believe that trouble was brewing, in which we might possibly become involved; but a thrill of real excitement passed through us when the Commander appeared at the door of the smoking-room and summoned a lieutenant to "go ashore and bring off all officers on leave."

Every naval officer has probably cherished an idea of one day seeing the real thing, but hopes had been raised on previous occasions only to be dashed to the ground by diplomacy, so that most of us expected this was only another scare, and made no secret of the fact.

As the evening wore on, however, more telegrams arrived, and, though the contents were known only to

the captain, it was apparent that this time something serious was happening. "And to think we are in this Old Junk," said one of the watch-keepers. "What cursed luck." Thus he echoed the sentiments of the mess. He implied, of course, that we should be pushed out on the trade routes, and so probably see nothing except a few enemy merchantmen, and those only if we were lucky, and during the first week.

At 10.30 P.M. that night (July 29), the *Koeningen Louise* left Southampton, passing within a few hundred yards of us. As we watched her, little did we guess that she was to participate in the first naval incident of the war.

Her departure immediately preceded ours, as by 1 A.M. we were through the Needles and on our way down Channel.

Things were happening so suddenly that more than half the ship's company were unaware that the ship was at sea, until, with bleary eyes, they stumbled on deck at 5.30 A.M. to "Stow 'ammicks."

Of the hundred and one things that happened during the next thirty hours I shall say nothing, but, looking back now, it seems incredible that so much could have been done in the time. By dawn on August 1 we were at sea again for a destination known only to the captain.

From the course steered we gathered the negative information that we were not going to be in any "bust up" in the North Sea, and guessed it would not be long before we saw Gibraltar again.

There can be few men living who really *like* war under modern conditions, but there are considerably fewer who care about feeling they are out of it when fighting has to be done; and though, at this time, war had not been declared, it was obviously only a matter of days, and a gloom settled over members of the mess which was not dispelled to any extent by our arrival at Gibraltar on the morning of August 4.

Feverish activity of all kinds marked our short stay here: the ship was coaled, extra stores drawn, lighters were loaded with all the more valuable possessions and superfluous clothing of officers and men, and wooden articles were ruthlessly torn from their fixings.

Intelligence reports received during the day were of great interest, as from them we learnt the possible positions of the German light cruisers in the Atlantic Ocean and their probable bases of supply. The number at large was seven, and included the *Berlin*, *Strasbourg*, *Nurnberg*, *Leipsig*, *Dresden*, *Eber*, and *Panther*. Others were reported, but the source of information was unreliable. A large ship of the Woerman Line (Professor Woerman[1]) was

[1] This ship was eventually captured by one of our cruisers and taken to Sierra Leone as a prize. She was condemned in a Prize Court, and subsequently used as a transport for troops operating in German South-West Africa.

known to be acting as supply ship to these commerce destroyers, and had last been reported off the Canary Islands.

We sailed from Gibraltar at 6 P.M. on the 4th, just six hours before our ultimatum to Germany expired, again for an unknown destination; but the spirits of all hands had undergone a change since they realised that perhaps "it would not all be left to their big brothers in the North Sea." Discussions started as to our chances, should we meet with the "whole outfit" together.

At this time, with the exception of the captain, no one knew what ships were likely to join up with us, and the speculation involved a somewhat vital point.

Our flagship, on her way to Gibraltar, passed the *Strasbourg* on August 3. The captain of the latter had signalled that he was sorry he "could not salute the admiral's flag, as his guns were out of order"—thereby proving that by August 3 the German ship had her guns loaded and was prepared for any eventuality.

At midnight on August 4 a wireless message from the Admiralty informed us that war had been declared against Germany, and at last we knew that the Navy was to go to manœuvres using shell instead of blank.

The captain who had been certain on leaving Gibraltar that it was only a question of hours, had called the men aft before they turned in, and, standing on the capstan, addressed them.

The gravity of the situation did not probably appeal to them fully, but when they had heard that they belonged to a service whereon, under the good providence of God, the wealth, safety, and strength of the British Empire chiefly depend, and that the vigilance of each individual was of vital importance, the effect was electric, and as the bugle blared out the "Dismiss" they doubled away, and long after the accustomed hour of turning in small knots of men were seen discussing the probabilities of the old *Cumberland* "getting a smack at 'em."

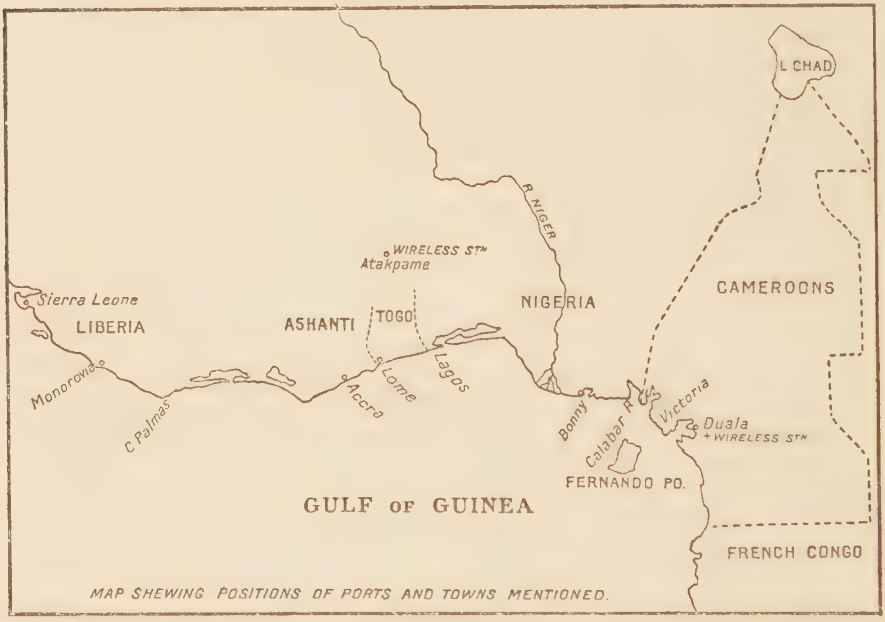
During the next few days a thorough search of the positions mentioned in the intelligence reports proved that our quarry had gone (supposing they had ever been there), but during the next week we heard that two German cruisers were using certain islands as a base, and that it was practically certain that they were there or thereabouts, and at any rate we should find their supply ship.

It was decided that we should attack at daylight. Overnight all hands had been called aft and told that the ship would probably go into action at dawn, and the importance of wearing clean underclothing was impressed on them. Cocoa, they were told, would be provided at 5 A.M. The cheerfulness displayed on dismissal showed the spirit which animated the men, and the progress of dinner in the ward-room was marked by a good deal of cheap wit *re* underclothing, not entirely confined to that worn by officers of H.M. services.

At 5 A.M. the next morning a cheerful crowd of officers and men assembled in their various messes in spotless whites and duck suits with underclothing to match, to drink the cocoa that had been provided as a foundation on which to fight their first action.

If it were possible to obtain a record of the feelings of officers and men during this period it would doubtless prove of great psychological interest, as quite ninety-five per cent expected to come under fire for the first time.

Unfortunately, though a thorough search was made of every likely nook, not a sign of



MAP SHEWING POSITIONS OF PORTS AND TOWNS MENTIONED.

life or habitation was visible, and the captain was reluctantly compelled to send a message to all guns crews "That he was sorry not to have provided them with breakfast"—a communication that was answered through the usual channels thus: "All right, sir, we'll save it up, they've got to 'ave it sometime."

This incident was the forerunner of several others which ended in precisely the same way, and the monotony of the ceaseless vigil was beginning to send the hopes of all hands back to the depths from which they had been dragged by the news received at Gibraltar: truly it looked as though the watch-keeper's surmise at Cowes would prove to be correct; but fate decreed otherwise.

On August the 18th we passed on a signal from the Admiralty informing our admiral that five German cruisers had been reported at Fernando

Po,[1] and that thirty-two German merchant vessels were said to be sheltering in the entrance to the Cameroon river.

A few hours later we were ordered to reconnoitre, and after having disposed of the German cruisers at Fernando Po, to turn our attention to the merchant vessels and to destroy the wireless station at Duala.

The wireless stations erected by the Germans, both in Togoland (at Atakpame) and Duala, were equipped with very powerful Telefunken gear, the former being in direct communication with Berlin: by means of these two stations information and orders were being passed to ships in the North and South Atlantic; the necessity for destroying them is therefore at once apparent.

The submarine cable connecting Lome in Togoland with Duala was cut on the outbreak of war, so that if the station at Atakpame could be disabled, no information could be transmitted from Berlin to Duala, except by long and hazardous methods.

To those who cannot understand why money and troops should be expended on such side issues as have arisen during the war, perhaps this explanation alone will suffice; and those who know the potential danger to trade of one cruiser acting on reliable information, will appreciate the efforts of those outposts of the Empire who accomplished the destruction of the station at Atakpame within three weeks of the outbreak of war, thus depriving the commerce destroyers of their source of intelligence, and removing a menace to the grain-carrying steamers from South America by forcing the enemy to seek another sphere of operation.

At this point it is necessary to see what effect geography and climate were to have on our future operations which would entail the establishment of a base and communication therewith by land or sea.

When the orders of August 18 were received we were about half-way between the Canary and Cape Verde Islands, and about 3800 miles from Fernando Po. It was improbable that the five German cruisers were actually there, otherwise we should have heard of them from ships on the southern routes. It seemed likely, therefore, that our attention would be directed to the latter part of the orders, which entailed a long stay in the vicinity of the Cameroon river, and the establishment of a coaling base together with suitable communication.

The question of communication is one of vital importance in expeditions of this kind, and involves much thought and organisation, so, at the risk of being tedious, I shall treat it in detail as occasion arises.

The news that something was to be done at last soon spread through the ship, and though the vast majority were

[1] A Spanish possession in the Bight of Biafra, off the entrance to the Cameroon river.

ignorant of the nature of the job, the spirits of all hands underwent a subtle change.

Officers produced books and charts, and fell to discussing the possibilities of landing with guns, demolition parties, &c., and not a few, I believe, stole away to find out where the Cameroon colony really was.

A journey of nearly four thousand miles was ahead of us, which introduced another problem—coal.

A glance at the map of the West Coast of Africa will show innumerable towns, some of which might be supposed to be suitable harbours for coaling, protected from the heavy Atlantic swell; but actually, between Sierra Leone and Cape Town, there are none capable of taking a vessel of 25 feet draught, with the exception of the entrance to the Cameroon river, which, for obvious reasons, could not be counted on in the beginning.

There are harbours capable of taking ships of 20 feet draught, though entrance to them invariably entails crossing a bar, only navigable at certain states of the tide and weather: one such place is Bonny in Southern Nigeria, about one hundred miles from Fernando Po. Thither our collier was sent to await orders, arrangements being made to communicate with her when required.

The ship arrived at Sierra Leone on August 21, and there found three colliers, one of which was despatched to Bonny. This ship was sent on ahead without escort, and arrived safely on August 26.

At Sierra Leone we also found the gunboat *Dwarf*, which we took in tow (to save her coal and increase her speed), and in company with a transport taking troops to Togoland, we left on the 23rd for Lome, this marking our first step on our way to the Cameroons.

The transport also had on board Sir Hugh Clifford, K.C.M.G., the Governor of the Gold Coast, who was on his way to take over our newly acquired colony, which had surrendered for a distance of 120 kilometres from the coast, to a small British force, on August 9.[1]

During the week, August 18-25, all documents on board, bearing in any way on the Cameroon colony, were carefully studied; the information obtained was both scanty and ancient, and in many cases very unreliable, but as our plans during the following week were based upon it and deductions made therefrom, a brief summary will be given.

The entrance is typical of West African rivers: the mouth divides into innumerable branches, forming deep mangrove-bordered creeks, some of which appear navigable for many miles from the coast.

There are many shoals in both river and creeks, and the entrance is protected by a bar,

[1] The remainder of the colony was taken after a few small but severe engagements, during which the wireless station at Atakpame was destroyed.

formed by the deposit from the river during the rainy season: this bar was not impassable for a ship of our draught, and formed a breakwater against the Atlantic swell from the south-westward.

The entrance is formed by two capes, about three miles apart, between which there is a channel a few hundred feet wide with a minimum depth of 25 feet.

The harbour immediately inside these capes is capable of taking a large number of deep-draught vessels, and appears a very suitable base for men-of-war operating in the South Atlantic.

The town of Duala is about fourteen miles above the outer anchorage, the approach being through a channel 20 feet deep about seven miles below the town.

The exact position of the wireless station could not be determined, but appeared to be about four miles to the eastward of the town, and in any case was out of the range of our guns, even should we be able to get to the nearest point permissible by soundings.

Reports differed considerably as to the number of Europeans in the Colony; but it was assumed, after taking the most reasonable estimate, that we were likely to find fifteen hundred under arms supported by four thousand native troops.

The rainy season lasts from May to October, and this fact was likely to be of the utmost importance to us, as the depth of all West African rivers varies very considerably between the wet and dry seasons —as much as 40 feet in the case of the Niger.

Two telegraph cables ran into Duala, one from Bonny and Lagos direct to London, and one from Lome in connection with Berlin; the latter, we knew, had been cut between Lome and Duala at the beginning of the war.

There is a low-power wireless station at Lagos, but it could not be assumed that uninterrupted communication could be established, on account of the German station at Duala and the Spanish installation on Fernando Po being able to jamb signals. This the Germans invariably did, frequently adding literal insult to injury in bad English.

The nearest port in our territory affording shelter to auxiliary craft if required was Calabar.

This was all the information we had collected up to the time of our arrival at Lome, which was meagre enough when the size of the undertaking is realised.

It is of interest to note what deductions were made and how they were gradually corrected and amplified.

It seemed fair to suppose that the harbour was defended, especially in view of its capacity as a base for German men-of-war.[1]

[1] In a document (which came into our possession when Duala fell), written by the Gunnery Lieutenant of the *Bremen*, dated August 1913, recommendations had been forwarded to Berlin which coincided almost exactly with our surmise.

The entrance probably would be mined—a very formidable defence in view of the narrowness of the channel. It was thought that the outer channel might be clear if the German cruisers were operating from this base, in which case it would be expedient for us to carry out only the reconnoitring part of our orders; for the prospect of taking on five or six light cruisers, each with a greater maximum speed than ours, would be one to cause anxiety even to the boldest captain.

The navigation of the entrance was likely to be difficult, as any aids, such as buoys, beacons, &c., would be removed, and the guns on the two capes at the entrance, if they existed, would have to be put out of action before any survey could be made.

The ship could not approach within fourteen miles from the town of Duala on account of the depth of water, and would probably have to act as a base for smaller and shallower draft vessels.

The numerous creeks would have to be explored, and those forming waterways from the sea to the town blockaded, hence the necessity for additional small craft suitably armed.

At this time of the year the rivers and creeks would be at their maximum depth, but they would rapidly fall towards the beginning of October; reconnoitring would therefore have to be completed before this date.

The entrance to rivers on the coast could only be entered by crossing a bar, to do which safely local knowledge was necessary, and natives must be procured to act as pilots.

That we should have to employ a certain number of natives was obvious, and as we had had no experience in handling these men, we should have to procure the services of Europeans who had been for some time on the coast. This was a very important matter, as the native, properly handled, can be made useful, while the uninitiated will probably not succeed in adding to his only two accomplishments, eating and sleeping.

We arrived at Lome on August 28, and here we were able slightly to supplement our information.

Lome had surrendered to a small British force on August 8, and the terms of surrender included the handing over of all merchant ships at that time lying off the town: one of these had sailed from Duala after war had been declared, the principal object of the journey being to return a number of natives to Lagos and Lome. Before leaving Duala, however, she had been employed by the Germans on one or two operations, some details of which we were able to get from her log. Our interpreter, after several hours of conscientious effort with this document, reported that all buoys in the fairway had been removed, and that merchantmen had been sunk to block the channel. During

our short stay of ten hours the military authorities, at the captain's request, brought off some members of the crew who had assisted in these operations. (Though at no time lucid, the native will give very useful information, at the expense of much perseverance on the part of the seeker after truth.) We gathered from these men that ships had been sunk in the channel, though evidence as to the actual position was most conflicting, positions being fixed, in the native mind, by the ability or otherwise to see certain well-known marks, such as a town: opinions, in this instance, were about equally divided as to the possibility of seeing the town of Duala from the position in which the ships were sunk,—a matter of some moment to us, as indicating whether the inner or outer channel had been the subject of attention by the enemy. In the latter case our task would be exceedingly difficult. One fact, however, was proved beyond doubt—namely, one channel at least had been blocked, and therefore we should have to expend a large quantity of blasting explosive, salvage, with our appliances, being out of the question.

Mines were also mentioned, one man declaring that he had seen them being made, but as far as he could gather none had been laid before the ship left Duala.

There were guns somewhere, undoubtedly; to give the positions and sizes, however, was beyond any of these men, who, as far as calibre was concerned, regarded anything bigger than a rifle as "Plentee Beeg."

From Lome we proceeded to Lagos, where we were successful in obtaining assistance and reliable information.

Here we came in contact, for the first time, with the Nigerian marine. Several officers of this Department laid down their lives before the operations were concluded, and as the success of the expedition was largely due to the material and personnel supplied by them, a few remarks on the assistance they offered, especially in smoothing over preliminary difficulties, is not only due to them, but will help to make clear the composition of the Cameroon Expeditionary Force and Flotilla.

Considering the services rendered to the country by this Department, it seems that it is very inadequately known, but the credit for opening and keeping open the numerous waterways of the Upper and Lower Niger, amounting to hundreds of miles of mangrove-bordered, malaria - infested creeks, is entirely due to the Marine officers who are constantly employed in this dangerous and unhealthy work.

These officers are generally selected from the Mercantile Marine, and have nearly all served in the Royal Naval Reserve,—a matter of importance to us.

The material used in this creek work was just the kind likely to be useful in the Cameroon river, consisting as it

did of all kinds of small craft from the Branch boat (used for carrying mails and passengers from Lagos to outlying towns) to the small motor boat, including also powerful tugs and roomy motor launches.

In addition there is a dockyard at Apapa (on the lagoon opposite Lagos) capable of building and repairing small craft and keeping the existing flotilla efficient. All the labour is native, supervised by white officers. The whole Department is controlled by a Director responsible to the Governor. We were fortunate in finding as Director Lieutenant H. A. Child, C.M.G., R.N., who, after giving us invaluable assistance, was unfortunately drowned while leading an expedition across the bar of a river during the latter part of the operations.

The officers of the Marine volunteered to a man to accompany the expedition: herein lay the solution of the problem arising out of the employment of natives.

In addition, their knowledge of creek work, and the use of explosives, was likely to prove of great assistance.[1]

As soon as the anchor was down, some officers of the Marine came aboard for a consultation with the captain, with the result that shortly afterwards several officers went ashore, each on some special errand: one to inspect and select a supply of high explosives and craft suitable for mine-sweeping work; another to arrange for the strengthening of small tugs with a view to mounting guns therein; a third to interview natives with a knowledge of the Cameroon country. This day witnessed the birth of the Cameroon Expeditionary Force Flotilla, which played such an important part later on in all operations, and marks the time from which we were able to consult with men having a long experience of the coast and its peculiarities.

To describe all that was done this day is impossible, but to those who were privileged to attend the meeting at Government House, at which the plans for the conquest of the Cameroon colony were discussed, it will always remain a red-letter one, however full of incident the memory may be.

While listening to the civil and military authorities, who had spent many years in the country, we were able to realise what a vast amount there was to be learnt about the Dark Continent before any enterprise was likely to be attended with success.

With the assistance of the Marine officers, who placed all their resources at our disposal, we were able to make the following arrangements:—

Three tugs (*Remus*, *Balbus*, and *Porpoise*) were to be strengthened structurally to take 12-pounder guns and mountings.

The following vessels were

[1] In clearing creeks of sunken obstructions, such as trees washed down by the rains, tonite was in constant use.

inspected and selected to accompany the expedition when ordered :—

Two large steam launches (*Vampire* and *Vigilant*).

Two large motor launches (*Crocodile* and *Alligator*, speed 14 knots, carrying capacity 100).

Two lighters, one carrying 2000 lb. of high explosives, and one fitted as a water-tank.

One powerful tug (*Walrus*).

The Goverment yacht *Ivy*, a large vessel used by the Governor of Nigeria for visiting up-river towns.

All these vessels were to be manned by natives, with officers of the Marine in command, and were ordered to join us at a rendezvous on September 6.

Arrangements were made at the Apapa dockyard for a certain amount of material (plating, rivets, &c.) to be sent down to us in the *Porpoise*.

The captain of the *Ivy* was to command the flotilla until it came under the orders of the senior naval officer.

Finally, a number of khaki outfits (bush-shirts, shorts, and putties) and sun-helmets were obtained for the use of landing parties and men employed as guns' crews in various armed boats.

Equally important were the arrangements made to augment the *personnel*.

The Nigerian Marine, by providing the crews for all the small craft, saved us all anxiety on this account, and left only the guns' crews to be supplied by us. The native crew came under the immediate command of the Nigerian officer in charge of the boat, thus leaving any naval officer who might be sent away free to direct operations and take charge of the guns—a doubly satisfactory arrangement.

It had been decided at the meeting referred to that troops would be necessary, but that they would be useless until a thorough reconnaissance had been made and suitable places for landing, &c., selected. Large numbers of the West African Frontier Force, West Africa Regiment, and Pioneers had been collecting at various places, and, as soon as Togoland had surrendered, were free to join the Cameroon Expedition. Orders were given for units to concentrate at certain ports, whence they would be collected by transports when ordered and escorted to the Cameroon river. Similar arrangements were made by the French, who had 4000 Senegalese ready to embark at Dakar as soon as we informed them that the way was clear for landing.[1]

The heat at this time was very oppressive, temperatures in the stokehold frequently rising to 130° F. Thirty Kroomen were therefore engaged to trim coal in the bunkers ; another twenty were also embarked, together with a surf-boat for

[1] An English force from Northern Nigeria had already been despatched to the N.W. Frontier of the Cameroon colony, while the French from the French Congo were busy in the N.E.

use in landing over bars. These men had to be borne on the ship's books for pay purposes. Some had no names, and others were blessed with patronymics which baffled the Accountant Staff, hence they were made to select "tallies" for entry in the ship's ledger. Undoubtedly they were assisted by the sailors in their choice, which accounts for the appearance in our books of such distinguished personages as King George, Lloyd George, Jack Friday, &c. To see King George receive seven shillings as a reward for a week's labours was the source of undisguised mirth of both officers and men.

These men worked under a head Krooman, and gave very little trouble.

Lastly, we collected pilots, guides, and spies with a knowledge of the Cameroon country. In this respect we were lucky. It appears that on the outbreak of war the native king of the Cameroons was imprisoned by the Governor of Duala for his failure to comply with some order issued which affected his property. By some means he managed to communicate with the English authorities at Lagos, asking for help, for which offence he was hanged. With characteristic thoroughness the Germans included in the sentence all his male relatives that they could lay hands on.

The late king's uncle had managed to escape, however, and reach Lagos, where we found him only too willing to join us and help in driving out the Germans, so that he who was now heir should in time occupy the throne of his deceased nephew. Thus we entered a second king on our books, his name being King Bell. As soon as it was agreed to take this monarch with us, he was sent ashore to collect a staff of guides, spies, and pilots from the natives who knew the country. The result of his effort added another twenty to our ever-growing complement.

Before leaving, it was arranged that, when possible, communication would be carried on by wireless, but that in the event of interference, either atmospheric or deliberate, important messages would be sent by despatch boats to Calabar (the nearest port in our territory). This was distant 100 miles from the scene of our operations, and until the arrival of our flotilla from Lagos we had only one picket-boat to do the trip.

We left Lagos on the evening of August 29. It must be remembered that our first duty was to reconnoitre Fernando Po, and prove or disprove the report of the five German cruisers mentioned in the Admiralty telegram. Had they been there, it is extremely improbable that we should have taken any subsequent interest in this or any other war, but suffice it to say that after a very thorough search we proved to our own satisfaction (being the most vitally interested) that they were not there or anywhere near, and so we were free to turn our attention to the Cameroons.

The search round Fernando Po was completed on September 1, by which time we wanted coal. Our collier, as already stated, had been sent to Bonny; to communicate with her a telegram had to be sent from Calabar. We consequently anchored off Calabar, and sent the picket-boat in with a wire ordering her to be at a certain rendezvous by 1 A.M. on September 3. The ship was unable to approach within many miles of the coast on account of the shoal water, and as the picket-boat had to do a forty-five mile trip each way, we remained there the night.

The next question to be considered was the formation of an advanced base, as, on the arrival of the flotilla from Lagos (due on September 6), shelter from the Atlantic would have to be found if it were to be anchored with safety. Fortunately the weather at this time was perfect; had it been otherwise, delays must have occurred which would have been disastrous, even if no actual damage had been done.

As a result of information in our possession, Victoria, a town lying to the westward of the Cameroon river, was selected. The harbour afforded shelter for small craft, and the town was connected with Duala by waterways and Buea (the summer capital) by rail. A road was supposed to exist between it and Bonaberri (a town opposite Duala on the river) suitable for the passage of troops.

We hoped also to replenish our larders from the stock of European food reported there, as, though by no means short, we could not count on the supply ship reaching us exactly when we wanted her, and we were victualling a large number extra to our complement.

The gunboat *Dwarf* rejoined us on the morning of September 4, and together we approached the town, a beautiful view of Mount Cameroon (13,000 feet) being obtained from seaward as we steamed towards the two islands in the entrance to Ambas Bay.

Mines had been so frequently mentioned during the preliminary discussions, that we decided to take no risks; consequently both the steamboats were hoisted out and rigged with mine-sweeping gear to sweep a channel between the two islands, either of which would have formed a very good observation station. To make certain that none existed the marines were landed on each, who, finding no sign of life, returned to the ship immediately. No mines were found as a result of sweeping, consequently the gunboat *Dwarf*, flying the white flag, entered the harbour. A deputation landed to inform the Commissioner that we intended to send a party to examine the town, making it quite clear that resistance would result in its bombardment. He replied that as he had no one to prevent us, he must give his assent. A party of seventy-five marines and seamen landed at noon.

It is interesting to note here that, by means of wireless telegrams, the Germans in the Cameroons had been continually informed of colossal German victories both ashore and afloat, and only a short time before our arrival "the greater part of the Grand Fleet had been sunk," one paper going so far as to give a very graphic account of Admiral Jellicoe's death. The Commissioner therefore expected help at any moment from German cruisers, which, he knew, must be available were the reports true, and doubtless he hoped they would arrive while our men were ashore.[1]

The landing party searched the town without opposition, but the operation took longer than we had anticipated; food was discovered in large quantities in a store at Bota, a small village about two miles along the coast from Victoria.

The search had not been completed when darkness set in, and as the malarial mosquito infests this part of the world, orders had been given to re-embark for the night, but as time was becoming increasingly important, the order had to be cancelled, and 50 marines remained ashore. According to their own reports, the night was spent in destroying all stores of liquor, the wantonness of which so touched their sensitive natures that any subsequent reference to the incident was always embellished with picturesque phraseology of the sea.

Six large lighters were anchored off Victoria, all of which would be useful to us; they were therefore selected as a means of transport for the food at Bota. Arrangements were accordingly made to tow them to that place at dawn.

So far there had not been the slightest sign of opposition, but during the night the departure of all the women gave ground for suspicion. An explanation was forthcoming at daylight, when a German officer brought an ultimatum to the doctor at the temporary hospital rigged up on the pier, which came from the Officer Commanding the German troops, to the effect that unless the force landed had retired in thirty minutes, his troops would annihilate it. Our interpreter was with the doctor when the ultimatum arrived, but to gain time he pretended he could not understand it. The doctor informed the bearer that he would have to send the ultimatum to the Captain, but at the same time he despatched orderlies to the Officer in Command of our troops, who was some distance away with the patrols, telling him what had happened, and suggesting that he should get ready to embark; a second orderly was sent to

[1] All through the operations prisoners we took expressed surprise that no assistance had been received from their fleet, and not until we escorted a transport with five hundred of them to England, and they saw at the various ports *en route* the number of British men-of-war and German prizes, did they realise that the reported German victories existed only in the imagination of the Press.

the officer engaged in towing the lighters, with the result that he slipped the tow and prepared to re-embark the troops. The time thus gained undoubtedly saved our men, as on looking at the thick bushes which surrounded the town, a number of German troops could be seen ready to carry out the O.C.'s threat.

It must be realised that our landing party was chiefly a "working party" employed in moving the food, and only a few men could be spared to form outposts over a comparatively long line.

Those on board were ignorant of the course events had taken ashore until the arrival of a signal from the doctor giving a précis of the ultimatum. This was reported to the Captain at the moment when he had just hooked a ten-pound bream, being engaged in catching his breakfast on the quarter-deck; both rod and fish were lost, but within three minutes orders had been given to the troops to re-embark and return to the ship.

During the time the party was ashore the town had been covered by the ship's guns, but until it was certain that our men had left the various stores and houses which they were searching any action was likely to prove as disastrous to us as to the enemy.

As soon as the men had returned on board, the ship closed on the store which contained the food. An officer was landed with a white flag, taking a message to the Officer Commanding German troops, informing him that at 11 A.M. precisely the food store at Bota would be blown up, at the same time requesting him to remove all women and children from the vicinity. This gave exactly half an hour's grace.

At 11 A.M. the ship opened fire, and five minutes later the food store had been wrecked and was burning furiously, but no other part of the town was touched.

Several English and neutral refugees were brought on board when our landing party re-embarked. They were on board during the bombardment, and were sent to Calabar two days later.

The results of our efforts had been more satisfactory than might appear from the foregoing description; actually they were of great importance.

We certainly had not increased our stock of food, but we had made quite certain that it could not be used by our enemies (who had paid for it) either in Victoria or Duala.

Secondly, we had convinced ourselves of the unsuitability of Victoria as a base on account of its distance from our objective, and the impossible condition of the road connecting it with Bonaberri.

Thirdly, we had discovered some lighters which would be extremely useful to us, and which we meant to have. They came into our possession eventually after an expedition which savours of the cutting-out days of the eighteenth century.

Before proceeding to describe this incident, however, it is

interesting to see how the German troops had suddenly appeared at Victoria, as it affords an example of the value of reliable intelligence, and points out the danger that must attend operations when previous reconnaissance is impossible.

It has been pointed out that our information was chiefly derived from documents on board, supplemented to a certain extent at Lome and Lagos. From these sources we were led to believe that the railway from Bota connected with Buea; actually it ran to Sopo, a military station on the slopes of the Cameroon mountain. A field telephone connected Sopo and Victoria, by means of which the Commissioner had summoned troops on our arrival. This information was given us much later when Victoria received our further attention, resulting in the capture of the Officer Commanding the troops.

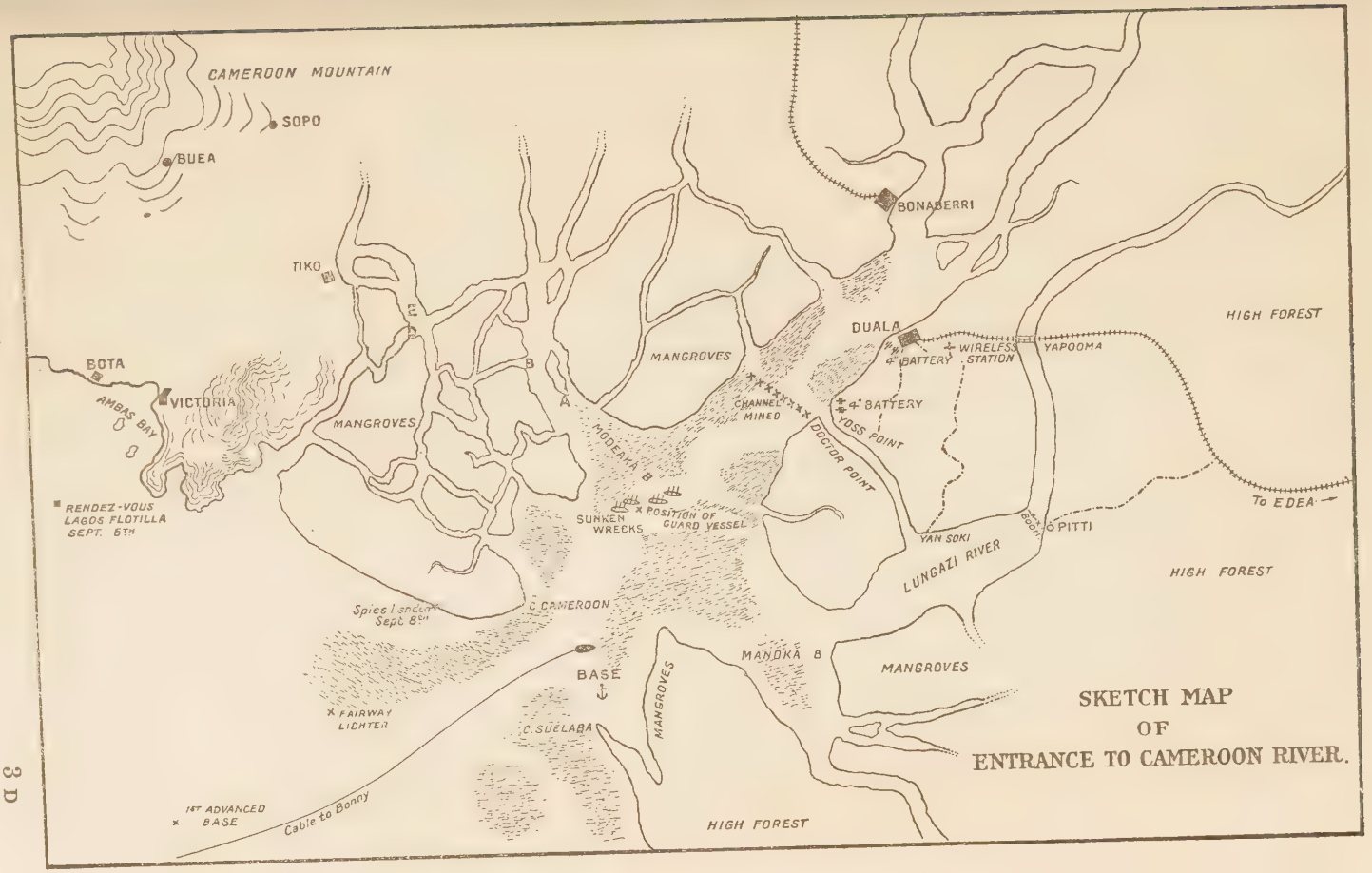
Being satisfied that the food and store as such would be no further use to anybody, we weighed anchor and steamed away to the south-westward towards the rendezvous, previously arranged, for the Lagos flotilla due on the morrow.

While at sea the refugees on board were questioned about communication with Duala, but very little reliable information was obtained, and by this time we were becoming convinced that the only way to find out anything was to go and see for ourselves.

At noon on September 6 the flotilla of small craft arrived from Lagos under the command of the captain of the *Ivy* and anchored at the rendezvous, having made the four hundred miles sea journey in good time and with little trouble. Its composition was as arranged at Lagos, with the exception that one vessel, the *Balbus*, a powerful tug, had been added. Originally it was intended to strengthen this craft for taking guns, but she was urgently required for mine-sweeping and other duties, so came with the rest of the flotilla, leaving the *Remus* and *Porpoise* in dockyard hands. Each vessel had a Nigerian officer in command, and soon after arrival they came on board to be introduced to the captain and to get orders.

The *Vigilant* was ordered to take the refugees we had on board to Calabar. She was not the kind of vessel one would have selected for a trip in the Atlantic, and the prospective passengers were most unkind in their remarks. It was their only chance, however, and they had to take it. After a most unpleasant twelve hours they arrived at their destination, considerably shaken but otherwise none the worse for their experience.

The next move was to secure the lighters in Victoria. The rendezvous was about ten miles to the south-westward of the two islands in Ambas Bay, and about fourteen miles from the position where the lighters were moored. It was


CAMEROON MOUNTAIN
SOPO
BUEA
TIKO
BOTA
VICTORIA
AMBAS BAY
RENDEZ-VOUS LAGOS FLOTILLA SEPT. 5TH
MANGROVES
MANGROVES
MODEAKA
CHANNEL MINED
SUNKEN WRECKS
POSITION OF GUARD VESSEL
BONABERRI
DUALA
BATTERY
WIRELESS STATION
YAPOOMA
HIGH FOREST
BATTERY
YOSS POINT
DOCTOR POINT
To EDEA
PITTI
YAN SOKI
LUNGAZI RIVER
HIGH FOREST
C. CAMEROON
Spies landed Sept 8th
BASE
MANDKA
MANGROVES
MANGROVES
FAIRWAY LIGHTER
C. SUELABA
1ST ADVANCED BASE
Cable to Bonny
HIGH FOREST
SKETCH MAP
OF
ENTRANCE TO CAMEROON RIVER.

decided to cut them out during the night. With this object twenty men were picked and armed with revolvers, but had no other impediment. India-rubber-soled shoes were provided to enable them to jump about on the decks of the lighters without making a noise, as the success of the operation was likely to be marred by discovery; for this reason also no caps were worn, lest the white top should show. The men embarked in the *Walrus* and *Vampire*, taking tow-ropes and a few tools with them. Under the direction of the gunboat *Dwarf* they approached with all lights extinguished and succeeded in reaching the lighters apparently unobserved; mooring chains were slipped, ropes made fast, and the whole lot taken in tow in a very short time without one word being spoken. All were successfully removed and brought to the rendezvous without a shot being fired. The *Vampire* struck a rock when returning and was badly damaged, necessitating her return to a dockyard.

We learnt afterwards from the Commandant of the troops in Victoria that he had seen our men come in, but thought that we were trying to land men for a surprise attack; he had given his men orders not to fire until ours had left the boats. In the darkness he mistook the lighters for our boats filled with troops, and when he saw the flotilla leave with something in tow he believed that we had changed our mind about landing. He confessed his surprise and chagrin when at daylight he realised "all de lighters 'ad gone."

Thus our heterogeneous flotilla had increased in numbers within twenty-four hours of arrival, and, being unwieldy, it became imperative to find shelter at once; whereupon it was decided to force the entrance to the Cameroon river and establish a base inside Suellaba Point, where it could be snug in all weathers.

The shoals (extending in many cases great distances), the flat coast-line, and the absence of well-defined features, make the approach to the West African Coast a matter of anxiety to the navigator, and when added to these difficulties, all aids, such as channel and danger-marking buoys are removed, his lot is hard indeed.

On September 7 we arrived at a point twenty miles to the south-west of Cape Cameroon, and anchored. This was our first advanced base. Briefly stated, the following are the difficulties we expected.

We knew our arrival had been reported, as an observing ship was sighted outside the entrance, which made for the harbour the moment she saw us. Therefore in no way could we attempt surprise tactics.

A large buoy marking the end of outlying shoals had been removed as expected, and a quick survey would be necessary and some reliable mark fixed to take its place.

We expected mines in the outer channel (when we succeeded in finding it), as the German cruisers were not using the harbour as a base. Finally we expected sweeping and surveying operations to be hampered by guns on Capes Suellaba and Cameroon when we got within range. It seemed as though we were going to have a stormy time in getting to the shelter we were seeking. Work was started at once.

None of the small craft had been armed in any way at this time, and relied entirely on the ship for protection, thus limiting their radius of operation. It was arranged to advance the base by stages after surveying and sweeping a channel, always keeping the small craft within range of the ship's guns.

The two motor launches (*Crocodile* and *Alligator*) were fitted with sweeps, and assisted our own two steamboats; the position of the outer fairway buoy was determined, and a lighter anchored in its place. This became our next base.

Sweeping was difficult, and the craft used not entirely suitable; but gradually the channel was found, buoyed and swept, and the third base was established at a position with the two capes well within the range of the ships' guns. We did not arrive at this point until after dark on September 8.

During the night King Bell, with three of his staff, was landed on the beach to the westward of Cape Cameroon, in an attempt to reach Duala and obtain as much information as possible, and to persuade the natives to give us any assistance they could. The Bell family had had great influence over the Duala natives, and the result of this experiment was very satisfactory, several really useful pilots being obtained. The King was given three days' provisions, and told to be back where he landed, on the night of the 11th. His provisions were in no way regal, consisting of one tin of corned beef jammed into a pocket of a very dilapidated coat, while some weevily biscuits occupied the other.

All the small craft not actually employed were anchored close to the lighter marking the fairway, and before advancing the new base any farther, it was decided to make quite certain whether guns existed on the two capes, Cameroon and Suellaba, by endeavouring to draw their fire; or, if unsuccessful in this, to land a party on each to reconnoitre. With this object a party of marines embarked in the *Ivy* and *Dwarf*, whose orders were to approach the coast on a signal from us. These vessels being of shallow draught could get quite close to the shore.

At daylight we opened fire on both points without any result. The marines were therefore landed in surf-boats to see if there was anything or anybody likely to be of interest to us.

Cape Cameroon was drawn blank, but four Germans were made prisoners on Suellaba and brought off to the ship. These men had been in charge of a signal station, and with them we captured their code and signalling apparatus, which explained the coloured rockets we had seen fired on the two previous nights announcing our approach.

These men seemed quite pleased that their labours were over; existence under the prevailing climatic conditions without adequate shelter had told on them. It was now the height of the rainy season, and the average rainfall in four months being 160 inches, a roof over one's head is a blessing not readily foregone.

The survey of the channel was continued, and was comparatively easy with reliable marks to go by. Sweeping was carried out simultaneously, the ship following astern of the boats into the anchorage where on September 9 we established what is hereafter known as the main or Suellaba base.

All the small craft, with the exception of the lighter marking the fairway and that carrying explosives, were brought in and anchored, and at last we were relieved of anxiety as to the welfare of our flotilla as far as damage from the sea was concerned. The crews of these boats spent their first peaceful night since leaving Lagos a week before.

This position remained our main base until the fall of Duala: its advantages and disadvantages as such merit a short description.

The anchorage was good from all points of view, with sufficient depth and room in the immediate vicinity of the ship to anchor a large number of transports, colliers, &c., all of which would be under the protection of our guns.

Though a long way (fourteen miles) from Duala, it commanded a view of the entire river entrance and the mouths of the numerous creeks, and was sufficiently far from the latter to be immune from surprise attacks.

The entrance to the outer channel was within range of our guns, and the ship could not be seen except by vessels intending to enter the harbour —an important point, as the position of the German light cruisers had not been established at this time. This possessed the additional advantage of blockading the entrance without establishing an external patrol.

It was sufficiently far from the surrounding mangroves to be comparatively free from mosquitoes.[1]

The principal initial disadvantage was its lack of means of communication, but steps were immediately taken to remedy this fault.

An attempt at wireless communication at Lagos was

[1] About this time we began to get our first malarial cases, resulting from the landing at Victoria.

frustrated immediately by the Duala station jambing the signals, an attention we returned in full to prevent any of their signals getting through to Fernando Po. Despatch boats were sent to Calabar (ninety miles) with any important telegrams for transmission by land wire. In this way we summoned our collier from Bonny, also a telegraph ship from Sierra Leone.

As previously stated, two cables ran into Duala, one from Bonny and Lagos and one from Lome. The former belonged to an English company and was old, the latter (a German) had been recently laid but was at the time cut in several places between Lome and Duala. The cable-ship *Transmitter* on arrival picked up the cable from Bonny, and having repaired several faults found therein, brought the end to her instruments, and within two days of her arrival anchored about 400 yards from the main base. From this time onwards no difficulty was experienced in communicating with London direct.

Another disadvantage worth mentioning was, that on account of the shallow water no use could be made of the ships' guns in an attack on the town. This difficulty was overcome later, on the same lines as those adopted by Mahomet with the mountain.

The exposure to attack from the sea set a limit to the number of men available for the many extraneous jobs, and this led to the training of stokers as certain numbers of guns' crews, an experiment which proved highly successful.

Our principal source of information at this time was the Admiralty charts, but though invariably these documents are models of accuracy for ocean and coastal navigation, they seldom make a pretence of being more than a rough guide to inland waters. In this particular case the chart we had (completed from German Government surveys up to 1897) was misleading.

Even the latest surveys cannot always be implicitly relied on, as channels and shoals are constantly shifting, hence all reconnaissances would have to include rough running surveys with soundings, for the guidance of future expeditions.

The Nigerian Marine officers, with their knowledge of creek work and West African coastal navigation generally, were invaluable to us during this period.

With a good main base established we could look round and see for ourselves the difficulties which lay before us, as although we were now comparatively close to our objective, there was a great deal to be done before we could cover the fourteen miles which separated us from it.

From the ship could be seen the masts and funnels of several merchantmen showing above water, leaving us in no doubt that the inner channel had been successfully blocked. It must be remembered that the resources of one ship are limited —men-of-war do not carry salvage plant, hence, except in

the simplest cases, the idea of raising any of these vessels is out of the question: eyes were turned wistfully to our gelignite lighter, and we felt repaid for our foresight.

It was reasonable to suppose that the mines (the existence of which we no longer doubted) would be laid above the sunken vessels, and that the guns would be placed so as to cover any attempt at a frontal bombardment of the town.

We had definite information that there were two armed vessels, the *Nactigal* and the *Hertzegan Elizabeth*, either at Duala or in the neighbouring creeks, but could not trace the whereabouts of the two gunboats, *Eber* and *Panther*, both of which had been at Duala shortly before the outbreak of war. It was supposed that they were lurking in the creeks below the blocked channel.

Finally, we guessed that with so many navigable waterways there would be a large number of small river craft, both steam and motor driven, capable of being lightly armed and offering resistance to our surveying and reconnoitring expeditions.

The flotilla was augmented by the arrival of the *Trojan*, a small steamer loaded with buoys, sinkers, and moorings, to assist in the survey of the entrance, and to lay down marks for use in the future when the transports should arrive.

The question of arming the flotilla was next considered, the guns available being 3 three-pounders, 8 twelve-pounders, and 8 maxims. (All ship's guns.)

The only craft possessed of a gun of any kind was the *Ivy*, whose pride in an old seven-pounder muzzle-loader was truly pathetic. This gun had a reputation apparently based on an achievement of fourteen years ago, when a salute of twenty-one guns was fired without doing any serious damage. The boatswain of the ship who had witnessed the performance, and had been shipmates with the weapon ever since, almost worshipped it, and took no pains to disguise his indignation when informed that as a piece of offensive ordnance it was useless. Further, when a suggestion for substituting a three-pounder was carried into effect, he did not feel satisfied until one day he replaced his treasure on its pedestal and fired a shotted round: his affection for the gun seemed in no way altered when interviewed in hospital shortly after the experiment.

In addition the *Ivy* was provided with a twelve-pounder gun and a ·303 maxim, an armament which comparatively speaking was formidable.

Our picket-boat carried a three-pounder and a maxim, and each of the remaining craft took a maxim whenever employed at any distance from the ship. Improvised mountings were used in all cases, and excellent work done when the occasion to use them arose.

Our King Bell and his spies returned on the 11th September, as arranged, bringing with them several swarthy ruffians

who had volunteered to act as pilots in the various creeks with which they were supposed to be familiar. In addition, these men gave information as to the nature and position of the defences of the town, and assured us of the readiness of the mass of natives to give us every assistance in driving the Germans out: the reason for this was not far to seek. On the outbreak of the war the Germans had forbidden any natives to use canoes in the rivers or creeks, and had on several occasions punished disobedience by death, the canoes being fired on without further ado. As this order deprived them of their fishing, their chief form of livelihood, it was resented by the natives, who were consequently only too willing to assist in restoring their country to a Power with more reasonable ideas of controlling it. The fact that the Germans considered the order necessary indicates that they did not trust the loyalty of their own subjects—another proof, if any were wanted, of the failure of the Hun as a colonist.

During the first few days, and at intervals throughout our stay, canoes came off in great numbers, full of men, some telling of atrocious crimes committed by the Germans, and bearing testimony to their statement in the form of mangled limbs which required dressing. They invariably asked to be allowed to carry on their fishing, a request which was always granted. Much valuable help was received from those whom we had befriended in this way. So keen were some of these men on paying the Germans in their own coin, that they asked to be given a rifle and allowed the chance of taking a prisoner: one native is so like another that their approach to a position would not generally be regarded with suspicion, and in two instances, when we wished to capture German telephone operators in outlying huts, we gave them the chance they asked for, with the most satisfactory results, the unfortunate captives being much relieved when transferred to our custody.

The friendliness or otherwise of the Cameroon natives was a matter always worth considering before planning expeditions, and frequently special efforts were made to insure their assistance. A special brand of tempting tinned tripe formed a part of the stores usually carried which appealed to the native palate. An amusing incident occurred on one occasion when an officer in charge of an armed boat was proceeding up a creek to act as guardship off a small town at that time occupied by our troops: his orders were to ensure the friendliness of the tribe which inhabited the entrance to the creek, to prevent any news of his operations getting through to the Germans farther up. With this object in view he invited the Chief of the tribe on board, and regaled him with the delicacy referred to: its effect was the establishment of such mutual goodwill that be insisted

on presenting his host with seven wives, an offer which, for diplomatic reasons, was accepted. As time was an object, and the prospective guardship was still seven miles from her station, it was decided that the good ladies should be sent by road: their failure to appear on board is attributed to the vigilance of the military, who placed double sentries on all the posts along the road they were expected to use.

Our own natives from Lagos were of two distinct classes, one very good, and one very bad; there seemed to be no medium, and rather a balance in favour of the latter. With one or two exceptions, the native pilots were of little value, their energies being confined to informing one after having run the boat ashore, "Small water lib 'ere, sah," a fact which, of course, was only too apparent. They did, however, usually know of the existence and position of bush paths and elephant tracks, knowledge which was frequently valuable, especially when selecting an anchorage for the night.

The first day at the base was spent in arming the flotilla, sweeping, questioning natives, and examining the chart with a view to selecting a suitable landing-place for a party to destroy the wireless station.

The chart we had (of which a copy is given) showed a creek connecting the Lungasi river with the main river, entering the latter at Doctor Point, well above the sunken vessels. Some back-door tactics of this kind would be necessary if the barrier in the channel proved impassable; but before any decision could be arrived at we had to prove the existence of this connecting creek and satisfy ourselves that the barrier was impassable. It was also obviously unwise to take any aggressive steps until we had made certain that the numerous creeks were clear of armed craft and concealed positions. This could only be done by actual inspection, and the next few weeks promised to be full of excitement, as indeed was the case. From this time onwards till the fall of Duala on September 27, boats were constantly away on reconnoitring expeditions, each day providing some exciting episode.

It is obviously impossible to give details of all of them, so a selection has been made of those which are typical, with the object of showing the amount of work necessary and the concomitant difficulties. It is well to outline briefly the task before us before mentioning the steps taken to pursue it to a satisfactory conclusion, bearing in mind the fact that we were dependent on our own resources during the whole of the time, as far as immediate necessities were concerned.

From the map it is clear that the creeks (navigable during the rains for craft drawing 15 feet) form possible hiding-places for armed craft of every description. The difficulty of the navigation of the waterways lies in the fact that in a

distance of 50 yards the water may shoal from say 5 fathoms to as many feet, with invariably the same result to the boat—she goes ashore. The knowledge of creek-work possessed by the Nigerian Marine Officers, and the most likely places to find shoals, saved us many unpleasant accidents; but it was very seldom that a boat returned from an expedition without being able to locate exactly the position of one shoal at least, the propeller often bearing evidence of the method by which soundings had been made.

To give an adequate description of these winding waterways is very difficult, and were it not necessary if the operations are to be understood thoroughly, it would be left to the imagination, as those who have had experience (especially during the rainy season) wish to forget it as soon as possible.

Generally they are bordered by an impenetrable tangle of mangroves (rising to a height of 15 feet above the high-water level), the haunt of many objectionable insects and reptiles, including the mango fly, mosquito, alligator, and crocodile.

The water bearing the deposit from the hinterland seaward is very muddy, and unfit for drinking purposes. Occasionally short strips of solid ground border the creeks between the mangroves, marking a banana or cocoa plantation, and usually we found they contained trenches and concealed machine-guns.

The ease with which an ambush could be laid made all our expeditions in open boats exceedingly hazardous proceedings; frequently the boats had approached within 100 yards of the positions, the existence of which we were ignorant until most unpleasantly informed by a burst of fire. It was nearly almost impossible to make out these positions, as the natural cover was exceedingly thick, while the boat on the river presented a very easy target: our comparatively few casualties can therefore only be attributed to the poor marksmanship of our enemies.

The width of these creeks varies from 600 yards to less than 50; the narrower parts were frequently blocked by wire booms entirely submerged, within range of machine-guns in concealed positions ashore It was seldom possible to send out flanking parties ahead of the boats, as the mangroves were impenetrable; elephant tracks were occasionally found by the sides of the creeks, but seldom ran parallel with it for long, and were not sufficiently wide to admit of successful military operations.

At the beginning, the enemy's launches, carrying armed men, patrolled these waterways, but gradually they were sunk, captured, or driven so far up as to be incapable of causing us any bother.

The accommodation in the craft at our disposal was such that the horrors of a protracted stay in them (amounting to over a week on end at times), without protection either from mosquitoes or the torrential rain, must

be left to the imagination. All food and water had to be taken, as the former was not procurable, and the latter, though plentiful, was unfit for use. Changes in the menu could, therefore, seldom be rung.

The temperature by day was usually well over 100° F., so that no fresh food, if taken, would last more than a few hours.

On September 11 the picket-boat (three-pounder and one maxim) and the steam pinnace (one maxim) were armed and prepared for the first reconnaissance. The object of this expedition was to survey the entrance to the Lungasi river, to examine the creek which, according to our chart, connected with the main stream at Doctor Point, and to select a landing-place close to this junction for a force making an attack on the wireless station at Duala.

As a result of questioning the natives who spoke pidgeon English,[1] we were led to believe that a road existed somewhere close to Doctor Point; but the native method of expressing the fact—"Road lib sah fit for go Duala"—left us very much in the dark.

These two boats left the base at 8 A.M., and spent most of the forenoon on the mud at the entrance, but succeeded in the end in finding a channel ten feet deep, and entered the Lungasi river. No trace of the connecting creek could be found, but at the place where it should have been, according to the chart, there was a German steam launch. This boat immediately received attention from the three-pounder in the picket-boat, with the result that the German in charge ran her into the bank and with the entire crew deserted her, disappearing into the mangroves followed by valedictory messages from the maxims of both boats. The launch was examined in the hope of finding a recent survey of the river, but the only trophies consisted of a weird collection of firearms, from a modern Mauser to an antiquated elephant-gun, with ammunition to match, and a half-finished letter by the German to his *fiancée* in the Fatherland. This letter was submitted to our interpreter, and from him we were able to get the opinion of the writer as to the fighting abilities of the English, and also a long description of what he intended to do should he be attacked. The girl would have been justifiably proud had he carried out his resolve, but the arrival of the picket-boat before his description was finished seemed to have upset him somewhat; so, lest the good lady should be left in any doubt, our interpreter added a few lines describing the appearance of the warrior when last seen, and expressing the hope that he would enjoy his new surroundings.

The launch was sunk im-

[1] We never came across a native who spoke German. All the German prisoners spoke to their "boys" in pidgeon English.

mediately after the examination, a three-pounder shell in the boiler doing all that was necessary. Its presence in this part of the river suggested that a trip farther up might prove interesting, consequently both boats proceeded up-river surveying and sounding all the way. About two miles had been covered when a boat appeared ahead containing several Europeans. This boat was fired on, and its occupants immediately dashed for the bank and disappeared in the thick undergrowth. Hoping to find out more of these people and their business, the boats approached the scene of their disappearance and were promptly fired on, but though the boat was hit no casualties occurred, and as soon as the compliment was returned by the three-pounder the argument became very one-sided. On landing, a telephone hut and half-finished trenches were discovered, which seemed to prove that the enemy expected an attack at this point, and considered it of some importance. This fact led us to form the correct assumption that in some way the place was connected with the railway, and so an attack thereon would threaten their line of retreat should they find it necessary to evacuate Duala. Having destroyed the telephone, wrecked the hut, and filled in the trenches, the two boats returned to the ship. From the information obtained, it was obvious that the idea of landing a force as previously suggested would have to be abandoned, and that a frontal attack on the town would be necessary.

Before this scheme could become practicable, some of the obstructions in the main channel would have to be removed. The picket-boat was therefore sent away with the cutter containing a diving party to examine the sunken vessels, obtain soundings, and to report on the possibility of raising any of them.

Diving operations at this time involved a serious risk, as the creeks had not been explored, and undoubtedly contained armed launches, any of which might appear at the entrance of a creek and attack the men at the pumps. The picket-boat therefore had to patrol close to the scene of operations. It did not take very long for our picket-boat to instil a very healthy respect into our enemies, to whom she became known as the "Red Devil."

Altogether nine vessels had been scuttled to block the channel, and any gaps had been filled in by lighters filled with sand or concrete. Two ships, if properly placed, would have effectively barred the way for deep-draught vessels; but the sinking operations were obviously conducted by an amateur with more material than knowledge, who placed six of them on the shoals clear of the channel. The ebb-stream during the rains runs very fast, a speed of nearly five knots being quite common — a fact which probably contributed, to some

extent, to the waste of material.

The divers examined the hulls at slack water (the only time when diving was possible) and reported the sluice-valves of all the ships open, and in some cases holes knocked in the sides. To close the valves necessitated a descent into the engine-room—a proceeding involving great danger to a diver, owing to the possibility of severing his air-pipe on the sharp edges of ladders, &c. To add to the difficulty, the water inside was almost black with oil, making it impossible to see, and the task of attending the diver a very nauseating one.

With no salvage plant available we could not hope to raise them, but it appeared possible to blast a gap through one portion of the channel where two lighters had been sunk. Were the operations successful, a maximum depth of twenty feet at high water could be relied upon. The success of this venture was doubtful, on account of the short periods when diving was possible, and the difficulty of handling heavy charges in the muddy water in the cramped positions in which they would have to be placed to have the maximum effect.

Orders were given, however, to clear the channel, and preparations made immediately. Owing to the doubtful issue of this undertaking, and the necessity for supporting any landing with guns of large calibre, arrangements were made to mount some of the ships' big guns on shallow draught vessels capable of getting above the barrier.

Telegrams were sent to Lagos, giving designs and measurements for strengthening and preparing a large lighter and dredger to take a 6-inch gun each.[1]

It would, of course, be to our advantage to clear the channel in any case and to be on the safe side, whatever the result of our efforts; a telegram was also sent home requesting the immediate despatch of a cruiser mounting 6-inch guns of 20 foot draught.

The survey of the entrance to the river was completed by September 16, as far as the sunken ships, buoys being placed to mark the channel.

Sweeping operations were carried out daily, and up to this date the water between the fairway buoy and barrier had been proved clear of mines.

It was noticed that as soon as our attempts to remove the barrier started, the Germans endeavoured to sink additional vessels during the night, consequently it became necessary to establish what was officially known as the Sunken Ship Guard.

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[1] Guns were eventually mounted in both of these craft, known to the Expeditionary Force as the *Dreadnought* and *Iron Duke* respectively. They are not mentioned again in this narrative, as they were not used until after Duala fell.

This guard was first placed on September 11, the only ship available at the time being the gunboat *Dwarf*, which anchored in a position abreast the second vessel shown on the map. None of the creeks on the right bank of the river had been reconnoitred up to this time, as we had only been at the base two days, and our small craft had been otherwise employed. The position of the *Dwarf* was therefore distinctly unhealthy, being open to attacks from vessels concealed in the creeks forming Modeka Bay. This guard was really only essential at night, as the Germans did not appear on the river by day after the ship had got inside the entrance. This left the gunboat *Dwarf* free to reconnoitre during the hours of daylight, a duty for which she was eminently suited, being well armed and of shallow draught.

On September 12 the picket-boat got above the barrier, and proceeded up-river for four miles in pursuit of a German launch observed close to Doctor Point. The *Hertzegan Elizabeth*, however, coming from Duala at full speed, forced her to retire again on the barrier. Two sweeping boats then preceded the *Dwarf* up as far as Doctor Point, when she came under fire from guns in Yoss Battery. This battery was very cleverly concealed, and the *Dwarf* was unable to locate its exact position. It must be remembered that the upper part of the river had not been surveyed at this time, and progress was governed entirely by soundings, a state of affairs which made manœuvring in action difficult. The *Dwarf* was hit once or twice, and the Quartermaster at the wheel killed, while five others were wounded. She was successfully withdrawn to her former position as Sunken Ship Guard, the result of her labours fully justifying the exploit.

We knew now the position of guns roughly and their calibre exactly,[1] and sweeping had been carried to three miles above the wrecks.

It has been pointed out that the ship having the sunken guard was in an unenviable position. She had to be ready to get under way instantly, necessitating steam for full speed being kept at hand, to do which effectively the boilers had to be cleaned frequently, an operation which in the case of the *Dwarf* entailed drawing fires. It was obvious, therefore, that she could only remain at her station for a limited time. The *Ivy* was hastily armed, with a three-pounder and two maxims, and sent to relieve her while she returned to the base.

The position of the *Ivy* was still less happy as guardship, with her limited armament, so during the day a twelve-pounder gun and mounting was bolted down to her fore-

[1] A fragment of shell was picked up on board, and though small, was sufficient to give us the radius of curvature.

castle. In addition the picket-boat was detailed to assist her.

The twelve-pounder as fitted would only have been fired if urgent necessity arose, and it was sincerely hoped that no attack by well-armed craft would be attempted before the support for the mounting had been strengthened. To minimise the possibility of attack a line of petrol cans was laid out by the picket-boat some distance above the wrecks, to give the Germans (who were always watching all operations closely) the impression that we had laid mines to prevent any further attempt to sink additional vessels.

The *Ivy* lay with all lights out during the night of September 12. At 10.30 P.M. she was attacked by some craft in the entrance to Modeka Bay. She was not hit, however, and did not reply to the fire for two reasons. Firstly, she could see nothing to fire at; and secondly, the nature of her armament was, if possible, to be kept secret until later on. That she was not hit is attributable to the fact that after dark she had dropped down on the tide about 300 yards from the day position, which had been accurately fixed by the Germans.

This incident convinced us of the presence of armed craft in the creeks, the general impression being that this attack had been made by the *Eber* or *Nactigal*, both of which we expected to be trying to reach Duala.

The gunboat *Dwarf* relieved the *Ivy* on September 13. If any further example of the joys of the Sunken Ship Guard vessel be required, the following incident, which occurred on the night of September 13, should suffice. It is typical of several schemes, most ingenious in their conception, which were brought to naught by clumsy execution.

The Germans undoubtedly thought at this time that the barrier would prevent anything larger than the *Dwarf* from getting within range of Duala. They knew, however, that she could do so, as she had proved it two days previously. They decided to destroy her by torpedo. A steamboat was fitted with two vertical spars secured over the bows, projecting to a depth of 12 feet. A bracket, capable of being slid up and down the spars, carried two flasks (used for making soda-water) about 6 feet long and 4 inches in diameter, filled with dynamite. The flasks, when in position, were parallel to the fore and aft line of the boat, and were fitted with pistols carrying detonators arranged to act on impact. The "instructions for use" were these: A full head of steam was to be raised in the steamboat, while a second boat proceeded to the off-side of the target to show a light as a mark by which to steer; a third was to remain handy to pick up the brave who, having set the tiller of the steamboat to hit the target, was to jump overboard in time to be clear of the ensuing disturbance. The sequence in

which these operations took place had a marked effect on the result: in this instance the man jumped overboard *before* the tiller had been set and when some distance from the target. The boat that was to pick him up found more pressing work to do when the *Dwarf* opened fire on the boat showing a light, so that the attack was in no way a success, and the "torpedo" having missed by 400 yards, cruised about until the steam died down, when it drifted on to a mud bank, whence it was rescued by the *Dwarf* in the morning. The "torpedo" was removed, and thereafter the steamboat became a valuable addition to the surveying flotilla. The man who had been entrusted with the aiming of this infernal machine swam to one of the sunken vessels, from which he was rescued in the morning, after having ample time to revise his torpedo drill. When questioned, he said he was a missionary, trying "to do his bit"; rumour has it that he is doing it, as a prisoner at Dahomey.

Incidents could be multiplied, but it must suffice to say that the sunken guard vessel was successful, without incurring a casualty, in preventing any further attempt at sinking additional vessels in the channel.

A similar attempt to that described above was made to torpedo us later on, but the "torpedo" ran amok during a full-dress rehearsal, and having scared the attendant boats to such an extent that they fled, it exploded harmlessly on striking the mangroves.

There was no longer any doubt that all creeks would have to be thoroughly scoured, and the work was started at once. One or two examples will be sufficient to show the kind of work to be done. On September 14 the picket-boat was sent away to destroy any launches, boats, or depots found in the creeks by Modeka Bay, and to try and find out from natives the latest movements of the *Nactigal* or *Eber*.

The particular incident under discussion is chiefly of interest, as it is the first, if not the only, instance on record of a picket-boat fighting an armed merchantman: it occurred in this way. While searching an island (marked A on the map), a steamboat full of Germans was observed entering a creek (B); this boat was promptly fired on before it disappeared, with the picket-boat in hot pursuit. The firing attracted the attention of the *Nactigal* up a neighbouring creek, as on turning a corner the picket-boat found herself within 500 yards of this vessel, which was under way and steaming towards the main river. Then started another chase, the picket-boat in this case being the hare. The three-pounder gun is mounted right forward in these boats, and therefore the arc of fire is limited to a few degrees abaft the beam each side, making it useless if steaming directly away from an enemy. The *Nactigal* opened fire as soon as the

picket-boat came in sight, and the latter, by forcing every ounce of steam on the engines, and zigzagging, was able to fire occasionally, and at the same time increase the distance which separated them. In this way three shells found billets in the *Nactigal*'s hull, while the picket-boat was not hit, though several shots fell close enough to splash her. The excitement was intensified by the fact that the position of shoals was unknown to those in the picket-boat, and had we been informed of their presence by the usual method, there could have been only one result. The narrowness of the creek and the high speed of the boat kept the helmsman fully occupied until the entrance to the bay was reached, and the combatants came into view from the ship. The *Nactigal* gave up the chase soon after sighting the ship, and disappeared up the creeks again. The loss of the picket-boat would have been irreparable, and she was undoubtedly saved by the coolness of the officer in charge, coupled with the superhuman efforts of the two men in the stokehold and engine-room.

For obvious reasons the *Nactigal* could not be allowed to go unmolested for any length of time: her destruction is interesting also, as it forms the only modern example of two ships firing at each other at point-blank ranges.

The only vessel we had at this time of light draft well armed was the gunboat *Dwarf*. She was relieved by the *Ivy* at the Sunken Ship Guard, and was ordered to go up the creeks to destroy all armed craft she could find.

She entered the creeks at Modeka Bay, and finding nothing all day, anchored for the night at D on the map, a position which commanded a view of three creeks, with a stretch of straight water in one direction.

Navigation of the creeks is almost impossible at night, and lying at anchor surrounded by unknown dangers, in a position with a very limited outlook (the creeks are seldom straight for more than a few hundred yards), is exceedingly unpleasant.

The *Dwarf* having no steam capstan took some time to weigh anchor, consequently the cable was prepared for slipping, and all hands stayed at the guns, which were loaded ready for instant use.

The creeks are a perfect maze in this part of the river, and the two ships *Nactigal* and *Dwarf* were anchored within a mile of each other without either knowing of the other's position. (The *Nactigal* was at E on the map.)

At 10.30 P.M. the *Nactigal* got under way and steered seawards, but on rounding the corner suddenly found the *Dwarf* only 50 yards from her. The creek was narrow, and it was too late to do anything but try and ram. The *Dwarf* opened fire immediately the *Nactigal* came in sight, and literally blew the latter's foremost gun and crew into the water. Being unable to slip

her cable in time the *Dwarf* could not prevent a collision, but her guns were still firing as the impact occurred. All those on board the *Nactigal* who had not been killed jumped overboard, and the vessel was last seen burning furiously, and drifting seaward. The Captain and several Germans were rescued; all were wounded, and gave graphic accounts of the hell to which they had been subjected from four guns firing at a range of ten yards. About a dozen were killed, while the *Dwarf's* casualties were nil. At the base the flashes of the guns could be seen, leaving no doubt that something had been discovered. A wireless signal received from the Commanding Officer of the *Dwarf* informed us that "he had been rammed by an unknown steamer and forced to beach his ship." This was serious, as we could ill afford one single craft, and least of all the *Dwarf*, as there was still a great deal of work to be done. He supplemented his first signal, however, as follows: "Am all right, return to base in the morning, provision-room holed and full of water; *Nactigal* completely destroyed." As a result of his first signal, which was made *en clair*, the Germans at Duala sent a wireless signal "offering to lend us a carpenter to repair our Dreadnought." For answer we considered the supplement sufficient.

The *Dwarf* returned to the base in the morning with a heavy list, and showing a clean cut in the side from the upper deck to 6 feet below the waterline. Fortunately only one compartment was damaged. She was anchored in shallow water to the eastward of the base, and immediately taken in hand by our engine-room staff. Diving was almost impossible, on account of the strong current and muddy water, so she was careened by filling windsails with water on one side and transferring heavy weights. In a week the repairs had been successfully completed, and she was perfectly seaworthy, a piece of work of which all concerned were justifiably proud.

On September 16 the *Remus* arrived from Lagos. This vessel was a very powerful tug, and was one of the two craft left at Apapa dockyard to be strengthened preparatory to mounting 12-pounder guns. She had also had sheet-iron plating placed as protection against bullets on those parts where she was most vulnerable.

The work done in the dockyard was merely to stiffen the structure of the hull to withstand the shock of discharge, and consisted of large gussets and angle-irons bolted to existing frames, giving additional support to her deck.

Her armament was to consist of three 12-pounder guns: the bed-plates to take the mounting had to be designed and made on board by our staff. The *Remus* came alongside on the evening of September 16, and left for gun trials on September 21, which proved successful. On her return she again came alongside to have

magazines fitted, and was finally commissioned on September 22, from which date she did yeoman service.

The *Porpoise*, an old paddle-wheel tug, arrived from Lagos on 22nd, and was treated in a similar way; her armament consisted of two 12-pounders and one 3-pounder, the work on her being completed on September 25. A 3-pounder was also mounted on the *Vigilant*. The flotilla was now becoming a formidable one, and arrangements had to be made to examine the guns, mountings, and ammunition frequently, as all were exposed to the weather, which at this time was very bad indeed.

We supplied an officer and gun's crew to all vessels mounting naval guns. There was practically no accommodation for them, but with an adaptability which is beyond all comprehension, they soon became accustomed to being wet through day and night, and infinitely preferred it to sharing the only available shelter with thousands of enormous cockroaches. No complaints were heard, and there is no doubt that the normal condition of the men was happy.

By far the worst experience in these craft occurred when anchored at night up the creeks within a few yards of the bank either side. Innumerable insects of all kinds made night a nightmare, and very few of those who took part in these expeditions escaped malaria.[1]

The night was also frequently made hideous by the trumpeting of elephants and squealing of monkeys in the mangroves and bushes, while the snaky form of a crocodile could be seen cleaving the surface of the water almost every time one cared to look.

No more need be said to give an idea of the nature of creek-work; boats werea way daily, sinking steam launches, destroying obstructions, telephone stations, &c., and generally scouring the vicinity, operations which added very considerably to our number of prisoners. We had a large depot for prisoners in the form of a valuable prize captured two days after we arrived at the base. She was a new vessel of the Hamburg-American Line, fitted with all modern appliances, including powerful telefunken wireless gear, and had been used as a look-out outside the entrance, reporting by wireless to Duala. This was the ship we had seen at the first advanced base. On our approach she had fled inside the harbour, and, being unable to get back to Duala on account of the barrier, had been run ashore in Manoka Bay to prevent us using her. When discovered she had steam up, and clocks found were still going, showing that she had only recently been deserted. The flight of the crew must have been precipitate, as no damage of any kind was done

[1] Altogether 240 cases of malaria occurred in the four months we were in the Cameroon river.

to her and all her valuable gear was left behind: the wireless set was used in one of our armed craft later on. After much labour and ingenuity had been expended, she was salved, and steamed round to the base.[1] A guard was placed on board, and she acted as a depot for prisoners until enough had been collected to send round to Dahomey.

Blasting operations had been in progress at the sunken ships for ten days before a channel was cleared. This work called for great skill and endurance on the part of the two divers who accomplished it. Heavy mines containing 500 lb. of gelignite had to be placed in very confined spaces of two submerged lighters, the work being hampered by the inability to see through the muddy water during the very short intervals when diving was possible.

Enough has been said to prove that the first fortnight at the base was not wasted, and on September 24 the state of affairs was briefly as follows:—

1. The entrance to the river from the Fairway buoy to Yoss Point had been swept, surveyed, and buoyed.

2. All creeks below the barrier had been reconnoitred, and surveys made of those likely to be useful; while the *Nactigal* and steam launches, &c., had been sunk or captured with their German crews.

3. A passage had been blasted through the barrier and a channel found for a ship of 20 feet draught.

4. All the ships' guns available had been mounted in the flotilla.

5. Communication with Lagos and London had been satisfactorily established.

6. A thorough appreciation of the situation had been made and sent to the Military Headquarters at Lagos.

Telegrams had been despatched some days previously, giving the date on which transports should arrive under escort of the cruiser we had asked for.

On the morning of September 23 the cruiser *Challenger* arrived, with six transports carrying three thousand five hundred troops with attendant carriers.

These ships were piloted into the base and anchored.

At this time we received the first mail we had had since July 29, and heard of the doings of our Army in France. We had frequently heard about them before from the German wireless telegrams, which led us to believe that there was no British Army left.

The troops comprised detachments of the West African Frontier Force, West African Regiment, Pioneers, &c., all natives, under white officers seconded from their regiments.

These men were accustomed to bush fighting, and the country in the Cameroons did not differ to any extent from that in which they had had

[1] This ship, the *Kamerun*, has since been condemned in a Prize Court and sold.

experience. The nature of the country and lack of European food make transport a serious item, which has to be done by carriers — hence, though the transports carried nearly six thousand five hundred souls, only three thousand five hundred of them were fighting men. A large hospital ship accompanied them.

On arrival the cruiser *Challenger* was drawing 21 feet 6 inches; steps were taken immediately to reduce this the necessary 18 inches, to admit of her passage through the cleared channel. Though it is an easy matter to increase a ship's draught, the reverse operation is always difficult, tiring, and slow. By working all day and night, however, in shifting ammunition from aft into lighters and removing all heavy weights possible, the draught was reduced to just over 20 feet.

The French transports, under a cruiser escort, arrived on September 24, bringing about four thousand Senegalese troops.

The base now became very crowded, over twenty vessels, most of them large, being anchored within a mile of us. This array, which was visible from Buea, which is 1500 feet up the Cameroon mountain, must have caused the Germans to think.

As a result of our reconnaissance we had found that "roads" marked on the map, if they existed at all, were usually only bush paths wide enough to allow one man at a time to advance with difficulty, therefore until we could actually land troops at the town of Duala there did not seem to be much prospect of using them.

The general idea was that three attacks should be made simultaneously if the answer to the initial demand of unconditional surrender were unsatisfactory.

The first or frontal attack was to be made by the cruiser *Challenger*, which could get to a point about nine thousand yards from the centre of the town; the second by a force of one thousand native troops to be landed at Yansoki, on the Lungasi river, and attack the town in the rear; and the third by two gunboats which, if possible, were to get within range of the bridge which carries the railway across the Lungasi and blow it up, failing which to bombard outgoing trains; in short, to threaten their line of retreat.

It was presumed that if forced to evacuate Duala the Germans would go to the eastward, because the railway connected with a strongly fortified town, Edea, about forty miles away. A railway also runs from Bonaberri to the northward, but it seemed unlikely that they would choose this, as it was not finished, and would only land them in the middle of the colony, where they would be cut off from supplies. Edea, on the other hand, was connected with the sea by creeks and rivers. All European food had to be imported, and the only means of doing so lay by the sea or through Spanish territory,

which bordered the S.E. corner of the colony.[1]

As each of these attacks presents some feature of interest, they will be dealt with separately.

The activity at the base on September 25 was intense.

The cruiser *Challenger* had reduced her draught to 20 feet, but it was found that not quite that amount existed in the cleared channel. Her captain, however, decided to take her through, and at 8 A.M. she proceeded with the gunboat *Dwarf* from the base to the channel. As anticipated, the *Challenger* touched bottom, but was forced over into deep water without any damage being done, thus leaving no doubt about a frontal attack being possible.

She anchored about half a mile from the end of the swept channel, which was over 10,000 yards from the centre of the town. The actual position of the mines laid had not been determined, though a very shrewd guess could be made, which would place them about one mile above the position selected for anchoring.

A deputation was sent ashore under a white flag to the Governor, demanding the unconditional surrender of the towns of Bonaberri and Duala, including all war material and ships lying off the towns. It was pointed out that an overwhelming force was prepared to back up this demand, and refusal would result in bombardment of both towns, and in unnecessary damage and loss of life. Two hours were allowed to prepare an answer, and secure women and children if resistance were decided on.

The behaviour of the Germans on receiving this message was typical. During the two hours allowed the ships kept the white flag flying, and in no way intended aggressive measures; but shortly after the message had been received at Duala, the Germans sent a number of floating mines down on the swift-running current. As these approached the ships they were fired on, and destroyed by rifles and maxims.

At the end of two hours a reply was sent which in no way answered our demand, but was a lengthy, badly-written document in German, containing a protest to the effect that we had fired with the white flag flying. Unfortunately, by the time this message had been deciphered, dusk had set in, and the bombardment of the town was postponed until the next morning, which allowed a certain time for the withdrawal of troops.

At dawn on the morrow the *Challenger* opened fire on special parts of the town, purposely doing damage only to certain buildings, as it was hoped to use the town as a General Headquarters for future operations. At 10 A.M. a very heavy explosion ashore, followed by the disappearance

[1] A blockade of the ports was established later on, but at this time no craft could be spared for the work.

of the wireless aerial, showed us that the Germans had destroyed the wireless station and were withdrawing. The unconditional surrender of the two towns and surrounding country up to one and a half kilometres was received on board the *Challenger* at 10.30 A.M. on September 27.

One of our demands had been that the man who had laid the mines should show us their present position and be present in the boat when they were being removed. He arrived at noon, and was embarked in one of the sweeping boats which shortly afterwards brought half a dozen to the surface.[1]

These six mines were taken out of the deep channel, and the *Challenger* steamed up and anchored off Duala. The surrender was precipitated by the other two attacks, as will be seen.

A thousand troops embarked in a transport on the evening of the 25th, and proceeded, in company with several smaller craft, to Yansoki, about three miles up the Lungasi river. There was a small road from this place to Duala according to the latest maps, but reconnaissances had shown that it did not come right down to the river bank, and to get to it necessitated a landing being made in the mangroves. It was decided to try this more as a feint attack than anything else. The transport left the base at 7 A.M., and arrived at Yansoki at 9.30. Fire was opened on her by a company concealed in the bushes, and she was forced to seek a landing-place a little lower down the river, thus adding a thousand yards to the journey through the mangroves to the road. On nearing the bank the transport went ashore, and only a few men landed, who found it quite impossible to make any headway, and so the attempt was abandoned. The position of the transport was very unhealthy; she was aground within fifteen yards of the mangroves, with a falling tide, and a number of the enemy known to be less than a mile away; but for the same reason which prevented our men getting to the road, the enemy could not reach her, and she remained ashore full of troops until 10 P.M., when with the assistance of tugs she was refloated and returned to the base. This incident had an effect which was of some importance, as the arrival of the troops was reported to the Germans at Duala, and showed them that their line of retreat was being threatened, and being simultaneous with the bombardment by the *Challenger*, undoubtedly contributed to the hurried surrender.

The third attack by the two gunboats provided most excitement, and had an effect on the general situation similar to that just described.

In the first reconnaisance

[1] Altogether 34 had been laid; 33 were destroyed, but the last was never found.

up the Lungasi, it will be remembered that the picket-boat discovered a telephone hut and trenches, both of which were destroyed. The assumption made at the time that this place (known as Pitti) connected with the railway proved to be correct; consequently had troops been landed there they would have been able to hold the railway and prevent the Germans using the line. Our object was to prevent the troops in Duala from getting away at all, and the third attack was planned to cut them off earlier than could have been done from Pitti. The telephone hut (if re-erected) was to be destroyed, and the two gunboats were then to proceed up-river and destroy the bridge at Yapooma, if possible, but at any rate to bombard trains crossing it to the eastward.

The two gunboats *Remus* and *Porpoise* embarked a half company of the Pioneers each, and left the base at 3.30 A.M. In trying to enter the Lungasi river in the dark the *Remus* went aground, and remained fast for an hour; when refloated she proceeded full speed, and arrived off Pitti at 10 A.M. No sign of opposition was shown until she was within 80 yards of the place, in spite of the fact that fire had been opened on the telephone hut at 2000 yards, and kept up during the approach, showing that the Germans had their native troops well in hand. When about 80 yards off a very fierce fire was opened on her by rifles and maxims, making it impossible to keep men exposed; consequently she was withdrawn to 500 yards, and bombarded the place for twenty minutes with shrapnel until the enemy's fire was silenced. Her withdrawal was exceedingly difficult, as the river was very narrow at this point, and the native at the wheel (one of the "very bad" class) found very important work to do in the bunkers as soon as the firing started, leaving the helm hard over before he deserted it: incidents of this kind are responsible for placing natives in one or other of the categories mentioned, and for the statement that we found a balance in favour of the "very bad."

It was noticed that a boom had been placed across the river just beyond Pitti, which would have to be destroyed before progress was possible. A second attack was prepared and carried out, during which the telephone was destroyed and the boom examined, but the fire from the enemy was even fiercer than on the first attack, causing many casualties. A heavy bombardment, however, silenced the fire, and the enemy retired. Before doing so they reported the attack to Duala, and the town surrendered.

Although officially the Germans had surrendered the country for only one and a half kilometres, they retired across the Lungasi and blew up the bridge at Yapooma after they had taken as many trains as they could across. This cleared the country for 11

miles from Duala to the eastward.

A small obstruction was found in the main channel, which prevented the transports from going up to the town at once; consequently for the first night both Duala and Bonaberri were held by a very small force of marines and seamen from the *Challenger*, and nothing could be done that day to relieve the 30 or 40 English prisoners who had been kept on board one of the Woerman Line steamers anchored above Duala.

The armed craft with the *Challenger* and *Dwarf* anchored off the towns as guardships, but the enemy did not attempt to retake either during the night. On September 28 the troops were sent up, and the Headquarters Staff took up a permanent billet in Government House. This house had been damaged by a shell from the *Challenger*, but was quickly repaired by our carpenters. The Tricolour and Union Jack were hoisted together at the flagstaff, and the capital of the Cameroons passed into the hands of the Allies.

In addition to the towns of Duala and Bonaberri, 9 large steamers, 40 or 50 lighters, motor boats, steam launches, &c., and a large quantity of railway material, came into our possession. About 400 prisoners were taken, mostly women and children, as the men had been all armed and sent away with the troops during the first night after the demand had been sent by the *Challenger*.

The *Hertzegan Elizabeth* was discovered above the town, sunk in a creek, while the floating dock had also been sunk. Both were raised, and the *Hertzegan Elizabeth*, after being docked, joined our flotilla as the *Margaret Elizabeth*.

A small stern-wheel gunboat completed the list of the booty, the total value of which was over £3,000,000.

The foregoing account is a précis of the work done by the ships mentioned during the first six weeks of the war, and is typical of the scouring done by the British Navy at that early time, resulting in the complete suspension of Germany's oversea trade and the blockade of her colonies.

Were it possible to obtain accounts of the various jobs on which the far-flung units of the fleet have been engaged from the Behring Sea to Cape Horn and Honolulu to the Canaries, a fraction of romance in war might be supposed to exist still, in spite of the outrageous crimes committed in Europe.

The ships mentioned in this account were employed for three months after the fall of Duala, during which time numerous combined operations took place; but enough has been said, it is hoped, to justify the assertion that, given the chance, they "Did their bit."

RECRUITING IN WAR-TIME.

"THERE are two great Policies—the policy of Muddle and the policy of Dawdle"—so said Dr Creighton when as Dixie Professor he was lecturing at Cambridge; and England of to-day will be disposed to admit there is much truth in the remark. Administrative problems do not often get settled: they either become absorbed into something else more immediately exciting, or they are thrust into a corner and buried for the time. Neither course disposes of them: like unshriven ghosts they rise again and are greeted as novelties, whereas in reality they are merely old apparitions in new clothes. Not the least persevering of these *revenants* is the problem of finding men for the British Army. True, it is just now insistent, gigantic, perplexing; but it is not new. It has risen from its political grave every time England has had to fight a serious war; it has survived Muddle and defied Dawdle, though both have done their best with it—as they seem likely to do now.

Theoretically, no doubt, every Englishman can be called out by the King to fight for his country. Practically this has never been done in times which may be called historic; either the will has been lacking or the machinery has failed, and thus in fact we have rested on this—we have had a regular army just big enough to provide garrisons and carry on the little wars; we have relied on an imperfectly-trained and disciplined force for home defence, and we have expected some of our dominions and colonies to provide similar forces for their defence; but when the emergencies came and a big army was needed for a big war we have invariably had to improvise it. The army grew throughout the eighteenth century, yet as the Empire grew faster the calls on it were always in front of its capacity, even when little bickerings broke out. But when serious effort was called for we have always had to begin to make a force which we could use. Cromwell made the New Model, but Charles II. dispersed it. William III. had to make an army afresh, but it had disappeared when, four years after the peace of Ryswick, Marlborough wanted it once more. He, patient man, rebuilt it, only to see it destroyed after Utrecht. Walpole, forced reluctantly into war by the Opposition, had to meet as his first difficulty the usual Opposition vote to reduce the army (at the outset of the war which they had forced upon him). The elder Pitt made it again, but it was gone by the time North wanted it against America. The younger Pitt was "caught short" in 1793, and ten years later, though the Treaty of Amiens was obviously only a truce, we were once more without a

striking force which counted. Our efforts in the Crimean war were ludicrous when compared with our resources; the "Black Week" of the Boer war compelled our Government once more to begin to make an army out of militia and volunteers; and considering the size of the forces against us in August 1914, our numbers, though surprising large for us, were almost negligible to the enemy. It has always been the same tale. We have never been able to strike a blow on land at the outset, because we have never had the men ready. So deeply engrained is this on us that we are inclined to resent the conduct of an opponent who does his best to deal a knock-out blow in the first round as being unsporting. It is certainly un-English.

Unluckily, though we have had plenty of practice in Army-making in a hurry, practice has not done much yet to arrive at perfection. The problems recur and recur; venerable pitfalls catch succeeding generations; the same old "solutions" solve nothing. A man in a uniform is mistaken for a soldier: a number of soldiers are mistaken for an army: the greater the temporary effort made to find men for a big war the more we plume ourselves that the thing is done with, whereas in truth it is only beginning, since the bigger the numbers the greater is the need for sustained effort to keep the big army up to strength. Every war has taught these things: every soldier knows them and repeats them, but no politicians have laid them to heart. Neither side can shovel the blame on to the other, though each has, it may be admitted, done its manful best. The Tory party scrapped the New Model, and William's men: both sides scrambled for popular approval in destroying Marlborough's army: the logical people who bellowed for war in 1739, and at the same time voted to decrease the army, were discontented Whigs who *called* themselves "Patriots." The "men who fought at Minden" found that neither the Tory Bute nor the Whigs who followed, cared to keep them, and the younger Pitt's initial years of peace were remarkable for even more than the usual neglect of nobody's friend — the army, though it is only just to say that the Whigs in Opposition urged on him still further reductions. Our politicians have always hated and feared an army; perhaps it is the humiliating contrast of silence and efficiency with talk and inefficiency; perhaps the clatter of Pride's musketeers still re-echoes distastefully in the House of Commons; so when we are on the edge of war, the first cry always is, "a truce to politics—let us put away political enmities,"—in other words, a confession that so long as we have politics we cannot have an army, and that if we are to have an army we cannot have party politics.

One result is that never in any war have we been either ready or quick to strike. And this unreadiness is growing

more and more serious in war. It seemed for a long time that Napoleon had taught the world all that there was to teach on the value of speed, but it looks as if a new factor had come in with modern vast numbers, trench warfare, machine-guns, and the power of the defensive. On the Western front, long as it is, each side in turn seems capable of holding its line with an inferiority of number against attacks which are exceedingly costly to continue. War appears likely to settle down into a sort of stalemate all along a line which is of any reasonable length, *after the first rush is over.* But that first rush (which can only be made by the Power that is first to put its real strength in the field) is the essential thing which gives the advantage. Possession is nine points of the law, and actions for ejectment are costly and uncertain things. If we suppose, as is only reasonable, that this trench warfare on the defensive be further perfected by improved machines and methods, then it will be the first rush, and the vigour and power with which it can be pushed, which will in the main settle every war where numbers are large, compared to the length of frontier, and the combatants nearly equal in strength.

That we were not ready the last time we wished to intervene in a great European war, namely, that against Revolutionary France and Napoleon, is of course well known, but we do not always realise how unready we were. On February 16, 1793, Dumouriez rushed out from Antwerp to attack our ally Holland and open the Scheldt. We decided to act, and we did so by parading the seven battalions of Guards; the Duke of York announced that the first battalions of the three regiments would be sent to Holland, and called for the volunteers required to bring even these up to strength. The whole brigade stepped forward, and on February 25 the three battalions set sail—in colliers. Some 2000 men, shipped without medical appliances or stores or transport, or even a reserve of ammunition, constituted our "striking force." It seems laughable, yet it is worth pointing out that our enemy had at the time not more than 150,000 *effectives* in the whole field of warfare: the reader may be interested in working out the proportion and comparing it with another proportion sum of August 1914.

The Guards were reinforced on March 5 by three regiments formed into a brigade and put under Abercromby's command, "but," wrote the Adjutant-General to the Duke of York, "I am afraid that you will not reap the advantage you might have expected from the brigade of the line just sent over to you, as so considerable a part of it is composed of nothing but undisciplined and raw recruits: and how they are to be disposed of till they have learnt their business I am at a loss to imagine." Bad as these were, they were the last of

the infantry that could be spared at the time, so eleven regiments of cavalry were warned for service. The eleven regiments, however, only mustered twenty-three squadrons. Later in the year the Government did set itself to raise fresh battalions, yet even in October 1793 it was a matter of difficulty to find a hundred men to fill up Abercromby's losses. Never in the first year had the Duke of York more than 3700 *British* troops under his command. In 1794 Pitt promised his Austrian allies a British contingent of 40,000 men, without having any clear idea where they could be got; he did provide about 20,000, and supplemented them by doles of 2000 a month, comforting himself that in ten months this would amount to the same thing—which of course it did not. At the summit the force rose to 25,000, but the men were not soldiers. "Many of the new regiments," wrote Craig, "do not know one end of a firelock from another; and," he added with his usual frankness, "they never will know it." Another soldier says the cavalry were "rough and ready—which meant drunken and disorderly." The junior officers, scarce though they were — most regiments had more companies than subalterns — were amazingly bad. They were ready to fight with the English officer's traditional bravery, but on the march they were insubordinate, drunken, and unpunctual. It was common for a regiment to begin its march under adjutant and sergeant-major only, while the officers galloped up hours later. There were guns but few gunners, and fewer drivers: the new corps of Royal Waggoners were even worse than the artillery. "A greater set of scoundrels never disgraced an army," said Craig; "half of them, if not taken from the hulks, have at times visited them." Worst of all was the medical side. Mr Fortescue[1] describes the medical staff as "drunken apothecaries, broken-down practitioners, and rogues of every description who were provided under some cheap contract." This luckless "army," thus flung on a foreign shore without any arrangements to supply it with arms, ammunition, clothing, medical stores, victuals, or reinforcements, helped the Austrians to keep up a fight with the French till the winter of 1794. Then the Austrians withdrew eastwards, and left the Duke of York to cover Holland. Frost bridged the rivers for the French, and our luckless force was hunted away to the north through bitter weather, perishing by hundreds for lack even of clothes.[2] The

[1] 'History of the British Army,' by the Hon. J. W. Fortescue—the standard authority for everything connected with the doings of our Army.

[2] Few had even greatcoats, and these were in rags: some men had been sent over in "slops"—linen jackets and trousers,—these disappeared, and many of the men became unwilling *sans-culottes*.

horrors of the retreat to the Yssel would, one might suppose, have sunk deep into the minds of the ministers, but they seem to have thought that it was the soldiers' fault to have lost their discipline because they had nothing to eat and their lives because they had no rags to cover them.

Here, indeed, was a staggering business. Bad beginners as we are, we do not often begin quite so badly. But the want of men and the want of preparation was chronic, and it is worth while to see some of the causes of it.

First of all, we could not send an expeditionary force because we had not got it to send. Of eighty-one battalions of the Line, twenty-eight were either in India or the West Indies, where sickness would on an average account for about half of them annually at the best of times. Gibraltar, Ireland, Nova Scotia, and Canada took up twenty-five more. That left twenty-eight, which, together with the Guards and the Cavalry, was not excessive to protect Great Britain. But immediately war broke out the Fleet began to demand men from the Army for service at sea.[1] Battalion after battalion was swallowed up till, two months after the declaration of war, there were only three regiments of the Line left south of the Tweed. Some were at sea; others had been sent to the West Indies and elsewhere engaged in running after distant objects—"hunting the sheep," in Windham's phrase, "before we had killed the dog." "Nibbling at the rind of France" was Sheridan's description. But wherever they were there were none to be sent promptly to the Low Countries, and so the campaign there—*which was the one decisive place where the enemy could be struck a mortal blow*—ended in hopeless defeat.

As soon as the obvious was once more perceived—namely, that the army was only just big enough to guard ourselves and the Empire, and left no margin for offence—the Government set to work to improvise an army, and as the need was urgent and the war popular, men at first came freely enough. A number of new regiments and battalions were raised.[2] In all, about 30,000 men were added between November 1793 and March 1794. But though satisfactory for a momentary spurt, this did nothing to secure a regular supply. It meant, as such efforts always mean, that the enthusiastic joined and the lazy remained behind.

Further, the methods of recruiting were mostly unsatisfactory. The ordinary plan was to raise men by beat of drum, which meant recruiting parties always absent from their regiments; but this method did not bring in men

[1] In June 1795 there were fifteen regiments serving in the Fleet.

[2] Among them the Cameron Highlanders, and Mr Thomas Graham's (afterwards Lord Lynedoch) 2nd Scottish Rifles.

fast. Much as the elder Pitt had done to improve the reputation of the army, to clear it from the old reproach of "brutal and licentious soldiery," the service was not attractive. It was badly paid and the men ill-cared-for. Discipline was enforced by the lash among a mixture often rough and disorderly, and the term "Lobster" had an ill sound in men's ears. In the end every employment gathers men by the sum of its attractions and advantages compared to those of other avocations in the same grade. The army was not attractive save to the adventurous, the desperate needy, and the intensely patriotic — and these were not large classes in the last decade of the eighteenth century.[1]

Since recruiting parties did not bring in men, recourse was had in emergencies to different methods. As has been seen, new regiments or new battalions were created, the task of raising them being often handed over to men of position in a district who could persuade those round them to join. So Alan Cameron of Erracht raised the Cameron Highlanders, and Lord Paget the Eightieth, and Colonel Duncan Campbell and Lord Huntly the Ninety-first and Ninety-second Highlanders, and many others. This was good, but not all who raised men did it from such sound motives or by such honest methods. The Government also set to work to encourage "raising men for rank" —that is to say, it invited private individuals to raise men, and offered in return rank in the army proportionate to their success. Hitherto this plan had been limited to the raising of *companies*, and therefore the most successful —or unscrupulous — recruiter or amateur crimp could not get higher rank than that of captain. But now that *battalions* were thrown open, the prizes were enormous, and the competition correspondingly acute. One lieutenant advertised a reward of two thousand guineas to any one who would get him a hundred recruits in six weeks. Demands like this soon called the Army-brokers from their customary business of exchange and sales of commissions to the task of selling recruits. This was the road to promotion. Beardless boys leapt over their seniors' heads; disreputable gamblers who had been forced to sell out bought themselves in again with high rank after a lucky turn at play; men of neither class nor breeding thrust themselves into the service, and fond parents speculated for their sons. One father wrote for leave of absence for his offspring for whom the paternal success in recruiting had secured the rank of lieutenant-colonel, on

[1] One great deterrent to enlisting was the fear of being drafted off to the West Indies. India was not so much disliked—there was the likelihood of fighting and loot. But in the West Indies there was nothing to get but yellow fever.

the ground that the said lieutenant-colonel was not yet of an age to leave school. Even women joined in to help their men-folk. "Think of my bad luck about recruits," wrote Lady Sarah Lennox. "If I had seen an officer a fortnight sooner, he would have sold me twenty at 11 guineas a man; but now they are all gone. My Dublin stock too, which was 40, has been reduced to 26."[1] Recruiting became a fierce gamble, in which the price of recruits went up at times to £30 a head. So by the aid of a long purse, crimping, and exchanges, officers who had seen no service were forked over the heads of the men who were fighting at the front; and little wonder that when they were sent out they were, as has been seen, lacking in discipline.

The excuse for this abominable system, the defects of which were perfectly well known in earlier days, though they were shown on a big gigantic scale, was the usual one. It was cheap—or at any rate it appeared to be. Government offered £5 bounty per man, and could not get them. If private purses were willing to buy them at ten or eleven guineas, then the country saved the money and got the men. So indeed it appeared. But the facts were otherwise. These new battalions seldom saw service as battalions. The men were at once drafted off to fill gaps in the existing line, and the battalion disappeared. But the officers remained—on half-pay, and they continued to draw that half-pay for the rest of their lives.[2] So what was gained on the swings was lost on the roundabouts, and the only result was to irritate the officers who were fighting at the front, and spoil the ordinary recruiting. Who was going to take £5 for a bounty when by holding back he might get three or four times that sum?

No one supposes that this folly is likely to be repeated, and the study of it at first sight possesses only an antiquarian interest. But there is one side of it which is unfortunately anything but antiquated. It is an example of the common and pernicious habit which Governments often have of fobbing off a difficult task which it is their business to discharge, on to amateur and volunteer helpers. Here were the facts: the country urgently needed men in a war on which the Government had embarked, but the men were coming in too slowly. It was the Government's duty to obtain these men; they did not obtain them; what they did was to encourage other people to try to do their duty for them.

Nor had this shirking the justification of success. The army was always short of men, all through the ten years to the peace of Amiens. When Eng-

[1] Mr Fortescue gives a number of other examples.

[2] Mr Fortescue cites a case of one lieutenant who drew half-pay for eighty years after the drafting of the 104th.

lishmen were not to be bought, the Government bought Hessians and Dutchmen. It contracted with some scoundrels who promised to collect Irishmen, and did so by atrocious methods. But yellow fever in the West Indies and Haiti devoured men much faster than they could be recruited or bought. When Hoche's force arrived in Bantry Bay on December 20, 1796, it was—or would have been, had all the ships kept together—18,000 strong. General Dalrymple had 2000 actually at hand to meet it. There were eight skeleton regiments of regulars in Ireland, but so reduced by drafts that they did not number 1600 men. Had the French advanced into the country no help could have come from England. "You know our nakedness in the matter of regular troops," wrote the Duke of Portland to Lord Camden, the Lord-Lieutenant. "We could not have spared you above a thousand regular infantry unless we sent the Guards." We had not men to put down the rebellion of 1798, or to send an adequate force to North Holland in 1799. We hired eighteen thousand Russians to assist us there.

Some reasons why the Army was perpetually bankrupt of men have appeared in the facts that the Army was not attractive, that the Government took no care to make men come forward, and that what men it got were mostly sent to regions where—to misapply Maitland's phrase—"life was short and death was violent." But all these considerations do not explain the complete breakdown of recruiting, unless we assume that the country was lost to all sense of patriotism—which it was not. The truth is that the Government got scarcely any recruits for the Line, because it steadily persuaded them to go elsewhere.

It is an obvious military axiom that if you are going to make men into soldiers at all, you should make them into the best kind of soldiers that you can. The best kind of soldier is the regular. He alone gets enough training: he alone can be sent to strike abroad—where only England can obtain a decision in her favour against a land power. The regular can do everything that the "home-defence soldier" can do, and do it better. Thus every man capable of serving in the regulars, who employs his energies, and sates his patriotism in home defence, is a man wasted in an emergency. And a Government most gravely errs if it fosters such home-defence forces at the expense of the Army. It deliberately gives up the power of striking, and contents itself with guarding.

Here then was the worst mistake of Pitt and his advisers. They multiplied defensive forces, and by doing so starved their offensive force. In England we had the Fencibles—who were to all intents and purposes regulars, but enlisted for home service only: we had the Militia, and another variety called the Supplementary Militia: later

we had the Provisional Cavalry: and to crown all we had Volunteers—infantry, artillery, and cavalry called Yeomanry. A fine variety, suited to all tastes: a man could do something, a little, or less, as it pleased him: drill for fifty days in the year, or twenty, or ten: trudge on foot or swagger on a horse as it seemed good to him—and at the time appease his conscience, or even honestly believe he was doing his duty to his country. Was he not defending its sacred soil? True, the invader delayed his coming, but whose fault was that? only let him come on, and he would see then that Englishmen knew how to fight.

Some of these forces may be dismissed briefly. Of the Fencibles it is perhaps enough to remark their numbers. Orders were given in March 1793 to raise seven Fencible regiments in Scotland. Two more were added in April, and others as time went on. Fifteen battalions were sanctioned in October 1794, and twelve more before the year was out. In 1799 there were thirty-one regiments of Fencible cavalry and forty-five battalions of infantry. As the Fencible was a regular, though for home service only, he was well drilled, and a soldier. The force was useful—within its limits; it did much to set free the regular army for service abroad, but it did nothing to keep it up to strength. It depleted it. The very fact that the men were soldiers in every sense save one, is the most damning criticism on the Government which raised them. They were the very men who would have gone into the army if they had not had the Fencible regiments to trap them on the way. The Government appears to have had an uneasy consciousness that this was so, for it constantly disbanded Fencibles in the hope of driving them to enlist into the army. Unluckily it destroyed the effect of this by raising new Fencible regiments with equal persistence. Here, then, was leak number one, which drained away possible recruits.

The Provisional Cavalry need not be taken seriously. It dated from 1796, and was made up thus. Every owner of ten horses was compelled to provide and mount one trooper: owners of less than ten were grouped, and provided and mounted a joint trooper. The Provisional Cavalry was to be paid if it was embodied (which it was from 1796 to 1799), and was reckoned to be 15,000 strong. This system had one merit: *it was compulsion*, or appeared to be such; but it was speedily robbed of this merit by an amending enactment which permitted Lords-Lieutenant to dispense with the compulsory Provisional Cavalry if they could raise enough volunteer Yeomanry to take its place—in other words, to do without a force which was under military discipline if they could get one that was not. But even when embodied it suffered from the chronic weakness of all

half-and-half soldiers. "The Provisional Cavalry," said one well-informed critic, "passed over the country like a blight. It was a pleasant conceit to make every man ride another's horse, till at length, when the men and horses were all brought together, no man knew how to mount, and so they all separated." The one condoning feature in the force was that at the best it was very small, and so did not do very much harm.

Criticism of the Volunteers is best postponed till we reach a later stage of the war, and we now come to the Militia.

This ancient engine appears on the popular historical horizon about the time of the Civil War. Most people know that the actual pretext of the war between Crown and Parliament was the control of the Militia: few realise that neither side could make the slightest permanent use of what they managed to secure of it. After three campaigns both sides had discarded it, and Parliament made a regular army which shattered the King's volunteer army at Naseby. Dryden's description of it runs—

> "Mouths without hands, maintained at vast expense,
> In peace a charge, in war a weak defence.
> Stout once a month they march, a blustering band,
> And ever but in time of need at hand."

For our purpose the Militia dates from Pitt's Militia Act of 1757. This fixed the proportion to be provided by each county, and laid down that this number was to be found by ballot from the parochial lists of eligibles. A man served for three[1] years and was then exempt till his turn came round again, or he was over age. Regular adjutants for each regiment, and a sergeant for each twenty men, were to be provided by the Crown. If embodied (in case of urgent danger) the force was entitled to the same pay as regulars, and was placed under the articles of war. It was to drill once a week from April to October,[2] and in battalions four days on Whitsun week. Here, then, was a measure which compelled a training in arms for all (with some few exceptions), and which, if carried out, would provide for home defence, and act as a sort of reservoir for the army.

Unluckily this fair promise did not come to fruit. The return of peace saw the Act neglected and only half enforced. And when the next panic came in the American War, and the ballot was enforced again, *those chosen by it were allowed to buy substitutes*, and that at once knocked the bottom out of its usefulness. "England expects every other man to do his duty" is not an inspiring national signal. Theoretically there seems little amiss with the idea that the unsoldierly should find some

[1] The period became five years by the time of the Revolutionary War.

[2] Pitt's original intention was for it to drill every Sunday, but the Nonconformist conscience got in the way.

one of more military tastes to take his place: it is plausibly urged that thus it will be better done. But it was not so. In the first place, instead of impressing the doctrine that every man is bound to train himself in arms to serve his country, it taught that this was only binding on those who were not rich enough to buy a substitute. "Your money or your life" is a traditional alternative with the highwayman, but it was a despicable policy for a Government. And more immediately fatal was this fact. "Substitutes" were presumably men who through tastes or need were not unwilling to serve. *They were the very material upon which the regular Army relied for recruits.* But if they were offered a bounty to take some one's place *in the Militia,* it was certain which choice they would make. Serve in the West Indies, when they could get a round sum to exercise themselves gently in the Militia—not they!

Thus by permitting substitutes for personal service in the Militia the Government set up yet another body to compete with the regular Army for recruits. They "robbed Peter to pay Paul,"[1] and could get no real service out of Paul when they had paid him. Still we have to see them go a deal further yet in the same direction before the war came to an end.

The defects of the Militia and the full beauty of the substitute system may be best studied in the later half of the war after 1803, but ere that be reached there are a few things worth setting down. The Militia was very properly embodied when war was imminent in 1793, and an addition brought the number up to 36,000 in the next year, while 16,000 more were levied in Ireland, the ballot being used there for the first time — not without some riots. The Militia Act was not extended to Scotland till 1797, though men were raised for the force before that date—again much to the dislike of the people. They did some useful service: they frightened twelve hundred French who had landed at Fishguard into surrender: they would have fought against Hoche had he come on, and they formed a big section of the force which dealt with Humbert's raid into Connaught in 1798, though they were among the "also rans" at Castlebar Races. They helped to fight the rebels of 1798; with the Fencibles, they did something to set the regulars free to go and die of yellow fever in the West Indies. But it was a constant struggle to keep up their numbers. An Act of 1796 ordering the levy by ballot of 60,000, called the Supplementary Militia, met with a deal of evasion, and the quality of them was poor. It was bound to be with only twenty days' training: the Irish Militia were the most unmanageable. "These,"

[1] Lord Methuen's phrase before the Bedford Commission.

wrote Cornwallis, "are totally without discipline, contemptible before the enemy when serious resistance is made to them, but ferocious and cruel in the extreme when any poor wretches with or without arms come within their power." The most remarkable demonstration of the militiamen's capacity (and, be it added, of the Government's foolishness), however, came in 1799. By this time the Government was at its wits' end for men; ordinary recruiting had completely broken down, and as a last resource it was decided to allow men in the Militia to enlist into the regulars. Hitherto *this had been forbidden*, so jealous had the Government been to keep its home-defence force intact. The first offer in 1798 had little effect[1]: there was the fear of the West Indies: but when that campaign came to an end both British Fencibles and Irish Militia began to volunteer to serve in Europe. With this encouragement the offer was renewed to the British Militia: ten thousand would be accepted for European service during the war, and a bounty of ten pounds was offered. This proved attractive, and the famous Ten Thousand began gathering on Barham Downs through August in order to be made into soldiers by September. Never was seen such an Anabasis. Every man had received ten pounds of bounty, and till that was gone they would live like lords and be as drunk as lords. Few deigned to walk even if they could. They rolled in in post-chaises and coaches; they refused to attend drill or parade, and none could deal with them; for, coming from all sorts of regiments, they were adorned with an infinity of old badges of which no man could make head or tail, and all of them had forgotten their new regiments and most of them their own names. To the officers in charge of this hilarious assembly came the stunning news that the next day Pitt and Dundas would arrive to review them. The officers dutifully spent the next perspiring morning in sweeping the alehouses for ten miles round to compel them to come in, and by the afternoon had gathered all who could stand. Pitt and Dundas duly appeared. The proceedings were to take the form of a *feu de joie* and a march past. The *feu de joie* went off all right—in every direction—but the march past was an impossibility and was

[1] The local magnates who controlled the Militia were indignant that their men should be tempted from them to serve the country abroad. The Lords Carnarvon, Radnor, and Fitzwilliam protested "because the measures prescribed by the bill are destructive of the constitutional force of the country by making the Militia ballot a fund for the supply, and its discipline a drill for the accommodation of other corps, and *by degrading its officers to the humiliating situation of commanding the miserable remnant of the regulars* rejected by recruiting sergeants of the line." The 1st Devon Militia, duly damped in similar fashion, produced three volunteers for the line out of 2500 men.

"dropped by consent." Yet in less than a month these men were over in Holland with Abercromby: they developed into good soldiers—as was natural when they were once under discipline—and till 1803 drafts from the Militia were by far the best recruits that the Line received.

But consider the process. These men had been, first of all, paid a private bounty by retiring persons to do their service in the Militia. In the Militia they remained for two or three years, getting twenty days' training per annum, and learning only the edge of a soldier's work: forbidden to enlist from the Militia into the Line, even if they desired, till it became clear that if men were not got somehow there would be no army left: then bribed by another bounty to do what they might have been persuaded to do long before, had the Government not allowed faint-hearted individuals and shirking parishes to make it more attractive for them to do something else.

Yet, even allowing for all these muddles, the lack of recruits still remains unaccounted for. The Regulars went short because Fencibles and Militia tapped their supplies; but then the Militia went short too. Was patriotism in the country dead, or was there another option, softer even than the Militia, which bled it as it bled the Regulars? That the Government was starving the Line to fill Fencibles and Militia we have seen; but one could hardly dare to guess that they at the same time starved the Militia to fill something even less efficient. Yet, incredible as this seems, it was the fact. In 1794 they had invited *Volunteers* to enrol themselves first in companies and then in battalions. The invitation was readily accepted: endless Volunteer corps of all sorts sprang into being, and doubtless meant well. But they were dissociated from the Militia, and therefore, till they were actually embodied, *under no military discipline at all;* and, worse still, all Volunteers who were effective (and the qualification of efficiency was to have attended drills punctually for six weeks) *were excused the ballot for the Militia.* This is the simple explanation of the ardour for volunteering, which thus became the easy way of evading even the second-rate duty of home defence in the Militia — and there need be no qualms of conscience about it. Did not the Government invite men to be Volunteers? It must prefer them, otherwise it would never have made this stipulation about the Militia. So when, in 1797, the mutinies of the Fleet really woke Englishmen to the reality of the peril, they enlisted in their thousands—but in the least valuable of all the forces, in the Yeomanry and the Volunteers.[1]

It came to this. Real sol-

[1] 280 corps of Yeomanry and Volunteers were formed in that year.

diers were scanty, because it was made more attractive for men to be half-and-half soldiers; and half-and-half soldiers were not to be had, because men were invited to join corps which were not soldiers at all. So the perpetual deficiency is explained; the cat is out of the bag; and the only reason for keeping the creature shut in so long is because it is only in the second half of the war that the full grandeur of the Government's policy can be realised.

To begin with, one might assume that when the Peace of Amiens came in 1802 the Government would have learned something. When war is actually on us we are prepared for stop-gap experiments. Some of them will certainly turn out badly, but the coming of peace should give the chance of improving, criticising, and rejecting. Here were the facts. We had been at war *for nine years*, and had accomplished nothing in Europe of any real worth. That was because we had no striking force to use; most of what we had was wasted in the West Indies, but in any case it was too small; it could not be recruited because the Government had given needless encouragement to home defence; and the home defence force was itself depleted by hundreds of thousands of undisciplined and useless Volunteers. Further, it was plain that the peace was in reality only a truce: nothing was settled by it: war was sure to recur at once. Yet with all this the Government once more abandoned any idea of the offensive; again it bent all its measures to home defence; it did nothing to improve the Volunteers or get rid of them. It merely repeated all the old mistakes on a larger scale. Pitt was no longer Prime Minister, but Addington, who succeeded him, only held office through Pitt's forbearance, and so for Addington's measures Pitt must bear his share of responsibility, and, as will be seen, Addington only copied previous failures.

It is a bewildering task to endeavour to give an outline of our military policy from 1802 to 1805. The whole thing is set down in Mr Fortescue's 'County Lieutenancies and the Army,' and readers of it will remember (with delight) the irony of the opening sentences of the Preface, and the author's remark, "If, as I fear, the ordinary reader finds these pages impossible to read, I can only assure him that I have found them maddening to write." A summary, then, has little chance of being clear, yet the whole matter has a new interest in the light of to-day; and if the only result is to convey confusion, it is at least permissible to say that confusion was the distinguishing mark of our policy.

Once more we may begin with the recruiting of the Regulars. As this was by far the most important matter, little attention was paid to it. All that need be remarked is that the increase of pay extorted from the Government

for the Army after the mutinies of the Fleet in 1797—an act of tardy justice—did not go nearly far enough to make the service attractive *per se;* that men still feared the West Indies; that the one serious proposal to increase the regular Army direct did not come till 1804: it took the shape of a repetition of the old disaster of raising men for rank, but the Duke of York, as Commander-in-Chief, would have none of it, and very rightly crushed it. Other efforts were indirect, and can be dealt with in the story of the Militia. But it must be borne in mind that the Army was just as short of recruits as ever; indeed it began the war in 1803 one-sixth short of its nominal strength, and though it was doing no fighting in Europe, enough recruits did not come in even to make up its losses.

Next for the Militia on which Addington proudly concentrated his military policy—the passive and inert defensive. When peace was signed the Fencibles were disbanded, with renewed hopes against hope that they would enlist in the regulars, which, as before, they did not do; Yeomanry and Volunteers were invited to go on with their service if they pleased (under Pitt's Act they were to end with the war), *continuing their privilege of escaping the Militia if they had attended five days' exercise in the year,*[1] but no attempt was made to bring them under discipline; and a new Militia Act provided for 51,000 men (the "old Militia"), and, in case of need, half as many more, called the Supplementary Militia. They were to be raised by ballot, from men between 18 and 45 (the unmarried and childless being taken first), they were to receive twenty-one days' training annually, *and they were forbidden to enlist in the Regular Army.* As substitutes were permitted, all this was on the old model. Ballots being "inconvenient" in Ireland (since they led to fighting), militiamen there were to be tempted by a bounty of two guineas per man. Government thus contemplated some 75,000 militiamen in Great Britain and 20,000, if they could get them, from Ireland.

Early in 1803 a renewal of war became certain, and with it there came a flood of legislation. An Act increasing the period of training from 21 days to 28, was followed by another doubling the bounty in Ireland, and a third reducing the property qualification required for militia officers. Plainly it was hard to get men, and it grew harder when on May 28 the Supplementary Militia were ordered to be enrolled. A week or two later the Deputy-Lieutenants were commanded to fill all vacancies within ten days, and the fine of £10 imposed for every man by which a county fell short was applied quarterly instead

[1] They were also excused the duty on hair powder. The amount of exercise required from them was substantially increased as the war went on.

of yearly. Next it was discovered — as usual — that the Fleet was short, and seafaring men enlisted in the Militia were ordered to be discharged into the Fleet. These things kept the hands of the County Lieutenants full, but there was much more coming. On June 20 appeared the Army Reserve Act, which provided for the raising by ballot of 50,000 men for service in the United Kingdom and the Channel Islands. Service was to be for five years, and the men could be drafted into second battalions of the regulars (for home service), and could enlist from these for general service in the Army. Substitutes were again permitted. This had only been law for a fortnight when there appeared the Levy en Masse Act (July 27), whereby the county authorities were required to make fresh lists—this time of men from 17 to 55,—re-sorted into different categories from the militia lists. The three ablest classes could then under direction of the King be armed (arms being kept in the church or other suitable place under care of the churchwardens), and exercised every Sunday from Lady-day to Christmas. In case of invasion all classes could be called out, embodied, and placed in regiments of Regulars, Militia, or Fencibles, and were to be under the Mutiny Act. Service under this Act did not exempt from the ballot for the Militia or Army of Reserve, but where a satisfactory number of volunteers offered, the compulsion of the Act might be suspended. This was followed by the Billeting Act, authorising the billeting of yeomen and volunteers, and defining these as persons who had taken part in twelve days' and twenty-four days' exercise respectively for the year. It contained another remarkable enactment, of which more in its place.

Here, then, in one session, were peremptory instructions to bring the Militia up to strength, to raise the Supplementary Militia, to create the Army of Reserve, and to call out men and arm and drill them under the Levy en Masse Act, all of them with different age qualifications, exemptions, privileges, standards of size, and responsibilities. We may, in passing, pity the sorrows of the County Lieutenants and their Deputies who had this vast mass of duties flung at them; but our real interest lies in this, that here, ostensibly, we have *compulsory* service, and in the Levy en Masse Act *universal* service. Let us see how it was to be worked, and how far performance came up to promise.

For the Militia and the Army of Reserve the engine of compulsion was the ballot, and the proceedings were of this sort. Lists of eligibles were prepared, passed on to the parish authorities, and posted on each church door. Claims to exemption having been disposed of, the quota required was fixed, and the drawing began. The most eligible class —men under thirty and childless—were taken first, and so on, the ballot being called in when needful to complete the quota.

There the matter should have ended, but in reality it was there that trouble began. No one was really compelled to serve, because there were so many ways of evasion. The balloted man—"lotman" was the technical name—might (1) serve himself for five years, or (2) produce for himself a substitute from the same county or district or an adjoining one, or (3) purchase exemption by payment of £10[1]—either of these last two courses secured the principal an exemption of five years; or (4) the overseers of any parish might produce parochial substitutes for the "lotmen," and pay them a bounty of £6 from the rates. For the Army of Reserve the fine for exemption was raised to £20, and the exemption granted from the ballot only lasted for one year.

It is at once clear that the man who wishes to evade service will not find it difficult. If he is moderately well off he will pay his fine and be safe for five years from the Militia. The Army of Reserve fine is more serious, but he can probably afford it, and he will not be drawn every year. Of course he may be able to find a personal substitute more cheaply, though, as we shall see, that was unlikely: or the parish may take the business off his hands. The well-to-do then had nothing to fear.

Again, the really poor married man was exempt if he had more than one lawful child and was worth less than £100. This is not a condition of ideal earthly happiness, but it had this compensation—it carried freedom from the ballot. Further, those who were under five feet four[2] inches, or physically unfit and also worth less than £100, were exempt. This must not be misread. You were not exempt merely if you were unfit or undersized, but only if in addition to these disasters you also were "poor." If you were crippled, lunatic, or deformed, but were worth more than £100, you were liable to ballot, and if you were drawn you must pay your fine or provide your substitute. Exemption was also granted at the other end of the scale to peers, and to officers and men in the Navy, Army, and Marines, seafaring men, resident members of the universities, the clergy, registered teachers, constables and peace officers, and some others. Further, as has been seen, Volunteers could escape service in the Militia if they could show that as Volunteers they were what was ironically called effective.[3]

It might be supposed that there would be a number of people who could not afford either the £10 fine or the buying of a substitute, and so would be driven to serve in person. But this leaves out of account the insurance

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[1] The sum was soon raised to £15.

[2] Five feet two inches for the Army of Reserve—an example of the pervading complexity of things.

[3] What exemption they were meant to have, and had, from the Army of Reserve will appear later.

societies. If the number of insurers in a district was sufficiently large compared to the quota required for the Militia, a small contribution from each would cover the fine, or pay a substitute.[1] To begin with, it was a sort of collective bet. Each bets let us say £1 he will be drawn at the next ballot. A few are so drawn, the greater number escape. They lose, and the winners use the money to pay fines or substitutes. This simple plan, however, soon spread to regular societies, which insured men against the annoyance of having to do their duty to their country in person, just as readily as they now insure them against fire or burglary.

It is now possible to judge of the compulsion applied under the ballot for the Militia and Army of Reserve Act, and it is seen to amount to very little. Few men were so poor that they could not insure, even if they could not face the risk of being drawn and having to pay the fine. The very poorest were exempt; the man just over the £100 line might be compelled—not by the law but by poverty. The well-to-do could all escape, and all the able-bodied had the back-door of the Volunteers.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing of all is the placid unanimity with which county authorities, parish officials, public and Government, assumed that every one *would* evade his duty. No one ever seems to have expected a man to serve as a principal; all the efforts of the law were directed not to compelling that, but to forcing him to do something instead of it—to find a substitute, to pay a fine, to serve as a Volunteer. Lest this should be thought an overstatement, it is well to have a few figures. Of the 26,085 men levied for the annual quota of the Militia in 1807 (by which time exemption fines had been raised, and the escape by volunteering made far more difficult, therefore *presumably* men would have been readier to serve in person), 22,956 were substitutes. One county alone produced over one-half in principals —that was Pembroke, with 76 out of 148; at the other end of the scale came Derby with 15 out of 667, Leicester with 12 out of 480, the Tower Hamlets with 2 out of 320, while Carnarvon (96), Rutland (61), and Middlesex (692) attained "highest possibles" in the art of evasion: *none of them provided one single man who would do his Militia service in person.*[2]

Where principals were so

[1] The risk of being drawn at the beginning of the war was not very serious. In Devon (a county which was better than most in providing its due quota) there were, in 1803, 42,315 persons of Militia age. Of these, the astonishing number of 15,968 were exempt, many as Volunteers. Still there were 26,147 left, and the annual Militia quota was 1572. The odds against being drawn in that year were about 17 to 1.

[2] In the ranks of the Middlesex Militia, whose total was 4500 men, there was one principal. When his five years ran out, the Lord-Lieutenant desired to keep him as a curiosity.

shy it is easy to imagine the wild scramble for substitutes. Early in 1803 the price of substitutes for the Militia ran from £12 to £21. By 1804 it had risen in many places to forty or fifty guineas. In 1807 it was £30 in Devon, £40 in the North Riding, £44 in Anglesey and Monmouth. In Forfar in 1811 it was anything between £50 and £80. For the Army of Reserve, which was much more disliked, and where the exemption fine was higher, prices ran even higher. They ranged from the modest £20 in Aberdeen and £25 in Dorset to anything between £30 and £40 in Berkshire, £30 to £60 in Middlesex, £50 in Sussex, and in some rare cases to £70, £80, and even £100. It must be remembered that the paying of a fine for the Militia was no protection against the demands of the Army of Reserve, nor *vice versâ*, so that every one was kept in a continual fret. Insurance societies and crimps did a roaring trade: any one with any disposition to serve as a substitute was at once booked, and kept till the price rose; even the recruits going to the regulars were allured away, as was indeed easy. What man so poor-spirited as to accept £7, 12s. 6d. to serve in the Army when as a substitute he might get anything from £20 to £50? In the last half of 1803, 360 recruiting parties for the Regulars gathered 3190 men—about 1½ men per party per month. The wonder is they got any.

This was home defence run mad.[1] Yet even so, neither the Militia nor the Army of Reserve could be kept filled. Ballot followed ballot, and fines were heaped on fines, and yet the ranks remained empty. In 1803, after six months of ceaseless effort, even the Old Militia was twenty per cent under strength. At the end of the same year only 40,000 out of 50,000 had been raised for the Army of Reserve, and of these a tenth had deserted; other causes reduced the number

[1] Yet there were plenty of people more foolish even than Addington's Government. A gentlemen writing in 1804, 'Thoughts on the National Defence'—an elaborate memorandum for the proper use of the Militia—produced the following: "Let the faith of the Government be pledged that no man shall be tempted by Bounties, or even suffered to quit the embodied Militia for the Army. That the original compact that they shall never serve out of England shall be held sacred. That Protestants, as they are all sworn to be, they shall not have a Roman Catholic Militia introduced into the country, and mixed with them. That till the enemy actually lands, or appears in force on the coast, they shall always remain in their own county or at most in one adjoining, and that only in particular peril and when great armaments are prepared in the ports of the enemy to invade us. And that when embodied a proportion from one-tenth to one-fourth, as circumstances may permit, both officers and men, shall in their turns have leave of absence till the enemy actually lands or appears in force off the coast. Then, the Militia being brought back to its true principles, that public spirit that has induced so many country gentlemen to engage themselves in the volunteer corps will operate with still greater ardour for a service far preferable from its being well regulated by certain law and equity necessary for the defence of the country." It would be difficult to surpass this amazing compound of bigotry, snobbishness, and military ignorance.

of effectives to 30,000. In 1805 it was reckoned that to bring up the Army of Reserve and the Supplementary Militia (by this time merged into one) to its full complement of 80,000, 31,000 men would have to be levied. Every branch of home-defence force was constantly short, and the main reason was not far to seek. It was all due to the system of exemptions and substitutes. Had the "lotman" been compelled to serve without avenue of escape, it would have been easy to keep him; but it was hard to get substitutes, and harder to keep them. The law said that substitutes must come from the same county or an adjoining one. In practice this was a dead-letter. Kindly officials connived at the release of their own tenants, easy-going ones made no inquiry; a substitute alleged he came from the neighbourhood — why inquire too narrowly? So perished the local character of the Militia, which came to consist of sweepings from all quarters, and this made desertion easy. Had the men of each district been compelled to replace deserters by others drawn from amongst themselves, every one would have done his best to hinder desertion and to catch deserters. But as it was, substitutes came from Heaven-knew-where—and went within a day; the only hope of keeping them was to dress, powder, and bequeue them as soldiers at once. Many of them "subbed"—to use an expressive term of Harrow slang—over and over again, much to the benefit of their exchequers, and still more to the profit of the crimps who sold them.

While compulsion as exercised for the Militia and Army of Reserve was a sham, the Levy en Masse Act was simply a dead-letter. It may be remembered—or more probably, it has been forgotten—that this Act arranged men in classes, and specified that all of them might be trained, if all should be required; that the men embodied might be attached to Militia or second battalions of the Line; but that, as usual, there was a loophole for evasion, on the leave given to Lords-Lieutenant to suspend it in districts where Volunteers reached a certain defined proportion. This wrecked the Act. It had not been passed a month before the proportion was lowered and left vague, and the Government themselves sent round a circular suspending it to give Volunteers a chance of coming forward. Of course Volunteers swarmed in with the express purpose of evading service under the Act. It is doubtless far more noble to volunteer than to wait to be forced, but it was also far more attractive to volunteer to do a little service not under military discipline than to be compelled to do something which could not be evaded. Besides, once more Government invited it, and surely they must know their own minds. So perished the Levy en Masse Act. Windham buried its empty frame in 1806 and substituted a Training Act of his own which had some sensible ideas; but Windham's tenure of office was cut short and

Castlereagh found it impossible to enforce it. So universal training fared no better than compulsion.

And here it is necessary to say a few words about the Volunteers, but it must be strictly confined to the effect of them on the recruiting problem. Addington, as has been seen, neglected to reform what he had inherited from Pitt, and handed them back to Pitt more of an incubus than ever. They were so numerous—there were 450,000 of them in the United Kingdom in December 1803—that the Government could not arm them, dared not rob them of their vicious privilege of exemption from service in the Militia, and did not like to discourage the coming of more. It tried to starve their numbers and make them more effective by reducing their allowances and increasing their day's training, but had not the determination to go through with the task. After all they were cheap (to the Government), and they made a show. Finally, after much shilly-shallying, the Government stultified its whole policy of compulsion. It had granted exemption in the Army of Reserve Act *to Volunteers in corps actually existing at the time* (*June* 16) *who were effective.* This, it will be seen, would cut out the man who became a Volunteer merely in order to escape service in the Army of Reserve. But in the Billeting Act of August 11, after defining what was meant by an effective Volunteer, there was added the provision that *effective* Volunteers were to be exempt from the ballot, not only under the Army of Reserve Act, but *under any future Act to raise an Additional Force.* How this clause got in no man knows—but anyhow there it was, and it secured the Volunteer in his disastrous privileges; for, as has been said, the Volunteers were neither trained, armed, nor under discipline. But the story of this "fleeting and inapplicable mass," as Windham called them, cannot be followed now.

The rest of the story must be summarised. On returning to power Pitt passed the Permanent Additional Force Act, which aimed at raising some 80,000 men in the Kingdom (including those already raised for the Army of Reserve), and an *annual addition of* 15,000.[1] Men were to be encouraged to enlist from this force into the Regular Army by a bounty of £10. The novelties about the Act were, first, the abandoning of the ballot and the throwing of the task of raising men on the parish officials, who were to be stimulated by a bounty of £1 for each man and punished by a parochial fine of £20 for every one the parish was short of; second, the cutting down of bounties for this force to twelve guineas, while the

[1] Thus while the Army of Reserve Act gave the idea of applying the ballot to fill second battalions for home service, whence men *might* volunteer for general service, but failed because it was an isolated spurt, the Additional Force Act did contemplate a steady supply, and the linking of the new levies with the Army.

bounty for the Line was made sixteen guineas; and thirdly, the placing of the cost of bounties on the Treasury. Unluckily the old bounties had killed recruiting, and the Act would not work. The parish officials christened it the "Twenty Pound Act," lay down under it and watched the fines mount up to a figure so high that they felt sure payment could not be exacted: which duly came to pass,[1] and the Act brought very few men.[2] Pitt then went back to what seemed common-sense: he encouraged Militia to go into the Line with a bounty of £10, and in less than two months got over 10,000. If we reckon that these had each already received some £20 to serve in the Militia, it will be seen they were not cheap; but this filled the gaps in the Regulars, whose numbers were actually declining.

Pitt died in January 1806. Windham, who followed him, believed in short service to bring in men for the Regulars, and was prepared to reduce the Volunteers and destroy their exemptions, substituting a system of national training. His time at the War Office was too short for his plans to have a fair trial, and it fell to Castlereagh, who succeeded, to bring some sort of order out of chaos by encouraging men in the Militia to enlist in the Regulars, by reducing the unwieldy bulk of Volunteers, and putting an end to senseless exemptions. To what straits we had been reduced in 1807 may be judged from these two facts: first, that in the last quarter of 1806, 3102 recruiting parties only brought in 2439 men; and secondly, that when Pitt's Permanent Force Act came to an end it had yielded only 15,000 additional men, of whom 3000 deserted and 8500 joined the Line for general service. After four years of war and legislation (though we had engaged in very little fighting) the Army could not make up its annual losses. But this part of the story would lead too far.

If we come to trying to draw inferences from this experience of the past, the first will probably be one of satisfaction. The present business of raising an Army may, we reflect, have been accompanied by some muddles, but they are a mere nothing compared to those of our predecessors. We have furnished a really big force: we have avoided the pitfall of being content with a passive and inert defence: we have not encouraged Volunteers to think they were doing all that was required by volunteering: we have not starved the Regulars in order to fill the Territorials, and we have not kept the Territorials at home. There has not so far been any sign of effort to evade service abroad. These are comfortable conclusions, and to a certain extent just, but there are some

[1] The outstanding or unpaid fines amounted to £1,800,000 when the Government in a spirit of biblical munificence forgave it all.

[2] Twenty-five counties did not produce a single man amongst them.

things to be set on the other side.

The first is the fact that, as usual, before we could make war, we have had to make an army. It is all very well to urge that it is being done better than usual—that is really no excuse. The damning fact is that it should have to be done at all. It is a sin against knowledge.

Secondly, it is not at all certain that we are doing it better—yet. So far the country has done much better, under a voluntary system, but the Government has not been called on to supplement this. The trouble came in all this business precisely when ordinary recruiting ran dry, and it was necessary to force or cajole or shame men into serving who did not want to serve. We have not yet reached this point; Pitt and Addington were less fortunate — they reached it sooner, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say at a lower figure, for the point depends not entirely on the spirit of the time, but on the pace the numbers are drawn off to serve. But in any voluntary system the time will come when men will be less ready to serve. The best go at the initial summons, and take many with them by their example. Then by degrees the first impetus slackens and slackens till it becomes clear that a fresh effort must be made. It is made, but it is sure to be less effective, not because there are not enough men to go, but because the most of the best went at first, and the average quality is less ready. There is much more inertia to overcome: more lump and less leaven. Perhaps it is not wrong to say we are in that stage now. But when the second effort is exhausted, and the recruiting again falls off, our Government will be where Pitt and Addington stood when they began their mixture of cajolery and compulsion: and till we have seen what is done, it is premature to say that our methods are wiser than theirs.

Again, there is talk to-day of reviving the ballot and of beginning universal service. Doubtless the first is possible, and the second may become as inevitable as it appears to many just and desirable. This last is an ethical point on which history can give no opinion. But it does emerge with startling clearness from the period which has been followed, that neither the ballot nor universal service is easy to begin in war-time. The ballot is bound to fail if exemptions, fines, or substitutes are permitted: the one hope of getting men to submit to the blind arbitrament of chance is that the stroke should be inevitable when it does fall. But it takes a resolute Government to enforce this, and to excuse no one from serving if the lot falls on him. Once permit fines and substitutes, and Government enters the recruiting market competing against itself. Once open the door to doing something else less arduous than serving, and the lazy will throng in by it. Pitt and Addington

yielded to the temptation to "make things easy." Are Governments nowadays of stiffer stuff?

Nor are the difficulties in the way of a sudden measure of universal service less serious. The right age for military training is the time before men have settled down to their life's work, married, and become —in their own minds—indispensable to their surroundings. But universal service imposed on that juvenile class will not give us the extra men required. *The majority of them serve already as soon as they are old enough.* To get big supplies of men it will be necessary to extend universal service to the elders — to those who ought to have been trained but are not. And at once Government is faced with the same problem as confronts it with the ballot — the difficulty of going determinedly through with the business without favour or mercy. It is required that they "be strong and of a good courage." Yet what was not easy for the soldier-autocrat is almost impossible for the politicians who hold their place by votes. The weak point does not lie in the idea of universal service now any more than it did in Addington's day: it lies in a Government's backbone.

These experiences of the past are worth pondering when men talk glibly of the ballot and universal service. It is not the voting for them, or the adopting of them, that is the difficulty: the test of our Government's ability will come when it sets to work to administer them.

There is one more inference that may be drawn. It has been seen that the task of raising the Militia and the Army of Reserve was not shouldered by the Government. It was fobbed off on the County Lieutenants — unpaid and patriotic servants of the State — who made a manful effort to grapple with superhuman difficulties. Similarly the responsibility was shifted on to the parish officials in the Permanent Additional Force Act of 1805; and again, in the business of raising men for rank, Government left the individual to do the recruiting. Yet if there is one thing that a Government which makes a war ought to undertake itself, it is the business of raising men to carry on that war. It will be grateful for individual help, but it must not presume on it; still less should it put the task off on voluntary helpers, and, contenting itself with having made the difficulties, look on while others endeavour to overcome them. Judged by this standard, Pitt and Addington alike failed dolorously. But it is difficult to be sure that those who are doing that part of their work to-day have done it much better.

G. T. W.

A LADY'S EXPERIENCES IN THE SINGAPORE MUTINY.

CHINESE New Year fell on Sunday, 14th February, and as usual the town had a holiday, all business premises being closed until Wednesday morning. For Monday afternoon we had planned a very nice run in our new car to Pasir Pangong, which is about five miles out and very picturesque, with cocoanut palms and Malay huts built right on the shore, so I told the head boy to pack up a tea-basket, as I was going to sketch and L. to read. However at tiffin our cook, who had been unsatisfactory for a long time, quite excelled himself in his slowness, and L. went down to the cook-haus to interview him, as earlier in the day I had my suspicions as to his sobriety. He found him very drunk with opium, and sacked him on the spot. We decided to give up our expedition to Pasir Pangong, and let the syce off work for the afternoon, as we should require him in the evening to take us to Europe Hotel for dinner. So, owing to the cook's sins, we did not go to Pasir Pangong, and thus probably he saved our lives, as Pasir Pangong was one of the most dangerous spots that afternoon.

About four o'clock, as I rested, we heard several loud reports like rifle-shots quite near, but as the Chinese were continually sending off Chinese crackers, and we had been enduring the noise for days, I thought nothing of it. L. said, "Surely these are not crackers," to which I replied, "Oh yes, but very near, probably in the M.'s compound." Our compound joins theirs, and both lie just beside the barracks (Tanglin), and are the nearest to them with the exception of the officers' bungalows.

The German prisoners were interned in a barbed-wire enclosure near the barracks, and had been guarded by Indian soldiers, all the white troops having gone to the front. Volunteer officers were up at Tanglin, and some volunteers were guarding the prisoners, as the Fifth Light Infantry were to leave for Hong-Kong during the next day or two. The Sultan of Johore's Malays had come over to relieve the Fifth, and I believe some of them also were at Tanglin.

L. went into another room where he could hear better. From there he was quite sure that the reports were not those of crackers, but rifle-shots, and he concluded that the German prisoners had escaped and the guards were firing on them. He went into his dressing-room to dress, but just at that moment a R.A.M.C. soldier, unarmed, white and breathless, and followed by a white-faced woman without a hat, rushed up the servants' stairs at my door. He called to L., "The Fifth have risen and are firing on the hospital;

will you look after Mrs V.?" I heard his voice but not the words. Immediately L. called out, "Get up and dress," in such a voice that I knew something terrible had happened.

I jumped up, looked over the screen door, and saw the woman. I called her in, at the same time getting into the first clothes I could find. Mrs V., wife of a sergeant-major in the R.A.M.C., was the only white woman left in the barracks. All the others had gone Home with the regiment. She told me that she was standing on her verandah looking across to the Military Hospital, expecting her husband to come over to tea, when suddenly she heard firing and saw the Chinese boys and two patients (Germans) come tearing out of the hospital. Down below the German prisoners were playing football. Then a soldier rushed across and called out, "Come down, Mrs V.; don't wait for anything." She ran down and they both fled along the back lane at the foot of our garden, passing the M.'s back gate, but as bullets were falling around they came on to us. The gardeners have found some in our garden since, so you may know how near a thing it was. A R.A.M.C. sergeant was shot in the hospital and afterwards died. All the time Mrs V. was telling me this I was getting into my clothes, assisted by her, L. calling out "Hurry up," but keeping very cool. He had ordered the car. Fortunately, as the syce had expected us to go to Pasir Pangong, it was ready at once. I dressed in about five minutes. L. got his revolver and we went down the back stairs and got into the car. I asked him about the M.'s. He said he had seen their car just go out, so they were safe. Later I found that it was only Dr M. who went out. The others were still in the house quite unconscious of danger, thinking that it was only the Germans who had escaped. We sent the soldier in to warn the S.'s, and then started. We tried to get out by the back gate and lane, but the gate stuck fast and we could not get it opened. L. thought the back way safer. There is a strip of jungle which runs straight up from Tanglin Barracks and ends just outside our front gate, and there he expected we would be caught, but did not say so. Mrs V. and I sat behind, L. with the syce, a Malay whom we had only had for a week. We tore down the road, a perfect fusilade going on, but not a bullet came near us, and we did not see a single sepoy. They must have been still busy shooting in the barracks. L. was loading his revolver as we left. Mrs V. had no hat, having refused to take one of mine, and my only luggage was a topcoat. I don't think it took us more than ten minutes to get off after the soldier alarmed us. But what a ten minutes! I never felt more frightened in my life; my knees seemed to be giving way, and I kept saying to myself, "Keep your head—keep your head." Indeed I think I said it aloud. And I did not even take a tooth-brush with me,

so my head rather failed me. I nearly took my jewellery, and then somehow felt how silly I was to worry about it when our lives were at stake, so left it.

The Indian Mutiny flashed into my mind; also the fact that we had no white troops. L. was splendid, so cool and collected, but his face was as white as death. I knew he felt pretty desperate. However, we got off and drove straight to town. As we left, it was strange to see the gardeners (Javanese) calmly weeding and cutting grass. The Chinese boys looked rather scared, so I called out "Take care of the house," and tried to look as if it was not very serious, but of course they knew something very bad had happened. They all behaved splendidly and stuck to their posts and looked after things; we have a kindlier feeling to the Chinese boys now.

We drove straight to Hotel Europe, and Mrs V. and I went up to a friend who lives there, while L. gave the alarm. He told us to keep quiet about the outbreak until he knew more about it, and not to frighten people needlessly. I found out afterwards that the Admiral and his Staff had already left for the scene of the trouble before I got to the hotel, but no one else seems to have heard about it until a little time afterwards.

I found my friends also resting, but Mr T., who had joined the Veteran Corps lately, having served fifteen years in the volunteers, went off at once to the Drill Hall to get information. Mrs T. was very good, and got tea for us at once. We were both very shaky. Then we all sat down to wait for news, hoping it would not really be as bad as we feared. However, half an hour later Mrs H. with a tiny baby and ayah arrived for shelter; she lives up in Tanglin too, and with her was another lady whose husband is a major in the R.A.M.C., both looking shaken and white. The former had been waiting at the Garrison Golf Club-house to play golf when a volunteer wounded in the throat rushed down from the barracks just above and said to her partner, "For God's sake get the women and children away, the Fifth have mutinied and are shooting down the guard." She came down in a ricksha, and her husband rushed home to get her baby's clothes and food, and came in a gharry.

The mutineers had entered the guard-room at Tanglin Barracks, passed the Sikh on guard, and killed the three officers who were there. One was shot while trying to telephone a warning to Colonel R. His wife, who answered the 'phone, heard the shot. Mr M. L., our next-door neighbour, was one of the officers. He was a very keen volunteer, and strangely enough his uniform was stolen out of his house, just two days after he got it, about two months before. Nothing else, practically, was taken, and we wondered at the time who had stolen it, because it would be a hard thing to

dispose of, and it was not very valuable.

As we sat in the little verandah there were seven of us women, and the baby. Occasionally Mr H. came in to report, as he was not a volunteer and could do nothing. We heard the gun fired to warn all volunteers to go at once to the Drill Hall for arms and ammunition and stretchers. I believe that it was a dangerous spot that night, as several men in the ranks could not shoot at all. They had been drilling for months, but had only just got rifles, and some rifles went off accidentally that evening, fortunately without any harm being done. We could not see anything from the verandah, as it looked to the back towards Fort Canning over many roofs of native houses.

One after another came in with tales of horrors going on outside. First, we heard of Dr Wh.'s death. He and his wife were motoring, and were stopped by the sepoys, who shot him in the leg. He asked his wife to bind it up. She tore a piece of her skirt off to do it, when they riddled him, and, saying "We're done for," he died in her arms. She was shot in the leg, but the wound was not serious. This happened near Sepoy Lines, quite a long way from Tanglin, but about the same time that we got the alarm. She was taken to the hospital there. Next came the news of Mr and Mrs W.'s death. She was such a pretty girl, a bride, and I had been invited to have tea with her on Friday the 19th. They were driving in a two-seated car, Mr W. driving, and were shot right through the glass screen. He stood up to shelter his wife, and was killed at once; she lived for a few hours. Another car-load of people were murdered just about the same place. The man driving was a magistrate, and stopped to ask the sepoys what the trouble was, having no idea anything serious was wrong. He said he was a magistrate, and might be able to help. They shot him at once, also the man with him. The wife of one and fiancée of the other, who were with them, got out the men, but they were dead. Another car was attacked, and in it was one woman and three men. Her husband stood up to protect her, but was shot, and the other men too. Three dead men were on top of the poor soul, but she got out and rushed along the road, and took shelter in an empty police station, from where she was rescued by volunteers.

It is a strange thing that the mutineers seem to have avoided killing women. I heard it said that their religion forbids it, but I can scarcely believe that; they did not hesitate to kill women in the Indian Mutiny.

Can you fancy the feelings of this handful of women sitting waiting to be told what to do, darkness coming on so quickly as it does out here in the East, no one knowing where the trouble was, — it

seemed to be everywhere (it really started in three places at once), and no one knew who was in it. In this town of many nationalities and creeds, we are so few Europeans compared to the Chinese and other races. We half feared a rising of all the natives, Chinese too. I met a woman in the hotel corridor that evening who said to me, "If the Chinese rise the only thing to do is to shoot ourselves—don't you think so?" I said I did not believe I should have the courage, but I suppose I should have done it.

The Chinese boys were to be found that evening and next, many in corners, talking and looking at us, and of course one's imagination gets vivid at such a time and pictures plots and horrors. Only it did not do to show fear, so we held up our heads and felt British and went on as usual. L. came in now and again, knowing nothing more, telling us no horrors and trying to reassure us, but no one knew where it was safest. All the time there was no sign of panic or fear, though we felt so desperately sorry about those who had been massacred, and wondered what our fate would be.

About 8 o'clock he came in again and said I had better go to the Club. I was reluctant to leave Mrs T., but he said he might not be able to get back again, and as he had a car waiting and she had other people with her and friends in the hotel, I left her, not feeling I could let him out of my sight for long. Mr T. had gone off long before this to the Drill Hall, and his wife was so plucky sending him off, simply trying to remember all he would require. He gave her his office safe keys before he left her, which seemed a depressing sign somehow, as I felt later when L. gave me his. Mr T. has done very well, he knows the country, is a keen volunteer, and now, fourteen days since the outbreak, he is still on duty and his wife has scarcely seen him.

At the Club I found lots of women, nearly everyone I knew, and heard all about their experiences and escapes. We sat about and waited, and then Commander R. and Lieutenant C. came in and said all women were to go on to the *Ipoh*, a Straits Steamship steamer lying in harbour. It was not yet martial law, nor yet the Admiral's orders, so I and some other women refused to go, as it meant leaving our husbands who were not volunteers, and so might be with us for a bit. Most, however, went on board the *Ipoh*, and I returned with L. and a few women and odd men to the Europe. We dined at once, and I arranged to stay with Mrs T., who kindly offered to share her room with me. The hotel was absolutely packed with refugees. During dinner, which we all tried to eat as happily as possible, because of the Chinese boys, a volunteer came round and told each table that every able-bodied man was to report at the Central Police Station in half an hour. My heart sank at that; it was an

awful moment. L. had some dinner, gave me his keys, said good-bye, and went off with all the other men except some of the older ones and some Dutchmen, who, however, helped later on, as did the Danes. The latter defended the Orchard Road Police Station next day splendidly. A number of these "able-bodied men" returned to guard the hotel for the night. They were eventually formed into a "Special Constable" corps, and have done very good work guarding roads. Some of them have even been in the fighting line.

On Monday night many women and children were taken to Government House. Lady Evelyn was sent off to Johore, and the Prince of Sweden, who was living up our road with the Swedish Consul, went with her. I believe she was very unwilling to go, but the Governor wished it. A guard was set round Government House, as they expected to be attacked.

There were 818 men in the Fifth Light Infantry, and they were almost all out, only a very few remaining faithful, and these did nothing to prevent the others in their dreadful work. They are Punjaubees, and look fine big men. They say this is a Holy War, but we believe it is instigated by Germans and financed by German money. At Government House the staircase was barricaded with mattresses and chairs, and men with rifles put there on guard; the women were told to go on the roof should it be attacked. The first night L. was sent with some others to guard the Central Police Station. Half an hour before they arrived there the two Sikh sentries on guard at the door were shot by some Fifth Light Infantry men, who came along a crowded thoroughfare and escaped. The little band of defenders expected an attack all night. They were armed with old sniders, 1869 pattern, with long bayonets. Some could not handle a rifle at all. Each had only a minute's explanation of the working from the man in charge, and then they had to puzzle it out in the dark. L. having been a volunteer, and knowing how to shoot, had no difficulty.

We lingered downstairs after dinner at the hotel as long as possible, but the Admiral told us it was safer to go up, and we reluctantly went to bed. We were rather afraid of the Chinese, so barricaded our downstairs bathroom with a plank and can of water, as the lock was a poor one, and the door led on to a passage where the boys slept. Events proved that we need have had no fear —they behaved very well—but that first night we were all jumpy a bit, and we had no men near to guard us except outside the hotel, so took precautions. Our bedroom door we had to secure with the old trick of tipping a chair-back under the handle, as we had actually lost the key, some one having locked the door and taken it away by mistake earlier in the evening.

We arranged coats and shoes ready in case we had to get off hurriedly again, and got into bed, but all night, with no thought of sleep, we lay listening to the Cathedral chimes, and wishing for dawn so that our men would be able to see what they were doing. We both wondered where our husbands were, and about daybreak we heard many shots all around. Such a terrible night. We heard later that some hundreds of the mutineers were marching on the town that night, and were stopped by the volunteers and the men of H.M.S. *Cadmus*, which is lying here just now. The *Cadmus* men were very quickly in the front and shot the man who murdered the W.'s. The mutineers' programme has been found. They intended to begin on Tuesday, but owing to the ammunition being ordered on board the transport to go to Hong-Kong on Monday, they began on Monday afternoon, shooting Captain M'L. in charge of the ammunition first of all. The large amount of ammunition the mutineers had command of was a very serious feature in the affair. They were to begin at 2 A.M., kill the garrison at Alexandra, and then at Normanton Camp, where 90 M.S.V.R. volunteers from the Malay States training here were encamped. The M.S.V.R. were the first to get up to Alexandra, where they saved Colonel Martin, who was held up in his bungalow. They did splendidly. Then the mutineers were to go to Tanglin and kill the garrison there and Europeans, and on Wednesday they were to loot the town. D., head of a German house, is said to be at the bottom of it all.

Next morning we got up very early and came down to hear more reports of people killed, and not much news of any other kind.

I had rung up Mrs A. whenever I reached the hotel on Monday evening. Her husband answered the 'phone, and told me he knew what all the row was about. At that time I was not very sure myself. They live as far out of town as we do, but on the other side of the German enclosure, and very near it. Mr A. said that the Fifth Light Infantry were firing on the Sultan of Johore's men, a company having arrived to relieve the Fifth L.I. and to assist in guarding the German prisoners. He saw from his house the Johore men running and hiding in the jungle, and later on two wounded men of the company came to him for shelter, and told him that they had *no ammunition.* This was absolutely true, poor wretches, and so of course they ran and hid when the Fifth started shooting them down. The A.'s sent the wounded to the hospital in motor-cars, and so later on when they found that things were really serious, and not merely a scrap between two native regiments, they had no cars to get away in, and had to wait until nearly dark before they could make their escape. As they drove into

town the volunteers were guarding the road, taking shelter in ditches. Before they got really alarmed, and after despatching the wounded men to town, Mrs A. actually did an hour's gardening. I rang them up a second time when I knew definitely that her husband was wrong, and that things were serious, and then they were feeling rather unhappy. All the occupants of the neighbouring bungalows were with them sheltering and waiting to be rescued in motor-cars.

On Tuesday morning the Admiral ordered all women and children to go on to a ship, the transport *Nile*, which was to take the Fifth L.I. to Hong-Kong. L. was on guard, but asked Mr F. A. to see us on board. I had nothing in the way of clothes except what I stood up in, and a topcoat which served me later on as dressing-gown and blanket, and was very useful. Mrs T. lent me things, and we took her dressing-bag and a small suit-case with us, but as she is smaller than I few of her things were of much use to me. It was extraordinary to see the women going on board the little launches—not a man but those working the boats were allowed to get on to them. We went down in rickshas to Johnstone's Pier, and the place was crowded with natives, principally Malays and Chinese, to see the "Mems" go off. I wonder what they thought about it. Everything looked much as usual, but we knew how different things really were, and we wondered what would happen before we got on shore again. Unfortunately the notice which ordered women and children to go on to the *Nile* was badly worded, and all the Eurasians and lots of black women and children went off too. They would have been perfectly safe on shore, as the Indians only wanted to kill white people; but I daresay a good many of them considered themselves white. Some of them then had the time of their lives. They probably lived on rice and curry at home; on the ship they commandeered everything and had a splendid blow-out.

It was about 11 A.M. when we left the pier. L. was on guard at the Club and waved to me from the verandah as we went out. I felt so miserable, and wondered if I should see him again. The Admiral sent a message before we left to tell us that Colonel Martin had been relieved—he had been held up all night in his bungalow. When the volunteers got up and relieved them his room was riddled with shot. Also, the Admiral told us that only 500 rebels were still out. This was better than 818, but I did not feel very much reassured, as I thought 500 well-armed native soldiers bad enough against our volunteers. They had wirelessed a French cruiser which had left twenty-four hours before; we hoped she would get back soon, and she did

get back on Wednesday evening with some hundred men on board. At one time there was a talk of turning the guns on the town and shelling it to clear out the mutineers, but as they were never allowed to reach the town that was probably an exaggeration.

Colonel Martin was warned to fly by a native officer at the beginning, but refused, and one of the Fifth L.I. British officers rushed down to Normanton Camp where the M.S.V.R. were training and asked them to come up at once. They were lying off after a strenuous morning, and at first thought he was ragging, but as soon as they realised it was true, seized their rifles and rushed off. They had had a shooting practice that morning, and all the ammunition left over was luckily still there. The M.S.V.R. rushed up to the Colonel's bungalow in time to get in. They put up bags and boxes in the rooms, crouched behind them, and defended it all night with the small store of ammunition which they had. Next morning at dawn our volunteers and the *Cadmus* men with a small maxim came up the long slope to the bungalow, through very wet and very exposed ground all the way, the rebels sniping them from the little huts all round, their own barrack huts. Some regulars who saw them say they never saw such pluck, and some of the men who were there were not even volunteers, and had never fired a shot in their lives. I heard of a man who only had a rifle in his hands twice before this affair, and he was right in the fighting line, and shot three men himself; while another who had a rifle given him and did not know how to load it, never used it, and now a fortnight later knows as much as he did before! I do not think he was in the firing line, but he was on duty as guard all the time. The sailors with their maxims soon cleared the rebels away, and the volunteers charged through them and relieved the Colonel. There were wonderfully few casualties.

We arrived at the *Nile*, a boat built to carry 400 passengers (Canadian Pacific Liner), now made into a transport, and found it packed—not a chance of a berth. At least I was told that there was one, but as there were hundreds waiting, and a woman with a baby stood near, I of course said she might have it. There were not even chairs to sit on; we were herded like native deck passengers, and still launch after launch kept bringing more and more women and children. Each load seemed blacker than the last. They even brought off the boys of St Andrew's School, Eurasian and black, some of 16 years of age, and at last we numbered 2400 people on that boat, mostly black people. What we suffered is beyond description. The blacks simply took everything, food, berths, cabins, lavatories, and as we white women would not and could not fight them, we fared badly. All the

first day we were living on water biscuits and iced water procured with great difficulty, but said nothing, as we knew that the men were very worried on shore, and we were safe where we were and off their minds. Some women got away on to cable ships lying near—telegraph people these were—and they kindly took off as many others as they could. One or two outsiders, there were very, very few—about four—made such a fuss that they were taken off with them. These had bits of cabins, too, so were not so badly off. Night baffles description, but had its funny side, and if we had not been so anxious about our men on shore it would not have mattered. But all this suffering was so unnecessary, as there were lots of ships in harbour which by arrangement could have been used for us. We managed to get a few chairs and blankets, and at midnight some mattresses and pillows came on board, and these were fought for — literally — as we were getting desperate. It is impossible to sleep in one's clothes out here. We had been damp all day and not able to change, so at night got into an empty bathroom, took off our clothes and hung them up to dry, and went up on deck again in nighties, I in my faithful "dressing-gown." I took my dress upstairs and hung it on a rail, as I feared it might be stolen downstairs. One poor dame hung her clothes up to dry and they were blown overboard. She had to ask a male friend, who was always coming off in launches with messages and comforts, to buy her a new set at J. L.'s. He has been awfully ragged about this by every one. We were a little company of old friends, and a few very nice women from the Federated Malay States, who had come down with their husbands in the M.S.V.R. They were very anxious about their men, as, of course, they knew that they were in the thick of it at Normanton Camp. It was pathetic to see how each man who came off from the shore was surrounded on his arrival on board, and questions of "Have you seen my husband?" "When did you see him?" "Where is my husband?" were fired at him. These men were all so patient and cheery, and I must say it was fine to see how many devoted wives there were in Singapore. All this time I never saw a tear among these anxious women, they were so bright and plucky, and only one Dutch woman did I see indulging in a little weep. It was really terrible for women with little children, and the children were sometimes *so* naughty. Our quartette played bridge in the smoking-room. I wish you could have seen one of our number storm the bar for a bottle of whisky and carry it down the deck. With difficulty a tankard of iced water and some glasses were got, and then all seated on a pile of mattresses left over

from our night's misery we doled out "Stengahs" to one another. I never tasted one until my days on the *Nile*, and I loathe them; but I had two on Tuesday and they kept me going. Already I am forgetting the misery and only remembering the funny bits. We had actually food lifted off our plates, but it was so disgusting we did not mind losing it. The sanitary arrangements were appalling, and I am sure we should all have been ill had we not got off when we did.

As news was good on Wednesday, I and other women wrote to our husbands telling how awful it was and asking them to make other arrangements, and at last we were taken off; but it was difficult to get away without offending the Eurasians and blacks. Colonel A. himself (his wife was with us, and so good and patient) came off with Sir E. E., and they were very nice about it all. I think they were rather shocked when they saw our condition. We were first told to get ready quietly, but the Eurasians heard and began to pack too. Finally, Colonel O. made a careful list, asking us all to say what ship we wanted to go to, and we got the tip what to say. He was very particular, and at last we were sent down to our first real meal on the ship—out of tin plates and mugs, but it was peaceful and no Eurasians were there. We were among the first to leave the *Nile*, and the white people were accommodated on three steamers, the *Nile* being left to the coloured ones. We went on to the *Selangor*, a S.S. Co. boat, so clean and dainty and quite near shore,—the *Nile* was very far out. We had no cabins, but we—ten of us—used the smoking-room to dress in, and slept on deck, and all had a bath, which was a comfort. L. was so good, sending me supplies of clothes, and food which would have been useful on the *Nile* but was not required on the *Selangor*. On the afternoon we went to the *Selangor* I saw him. He came on board very dirty as to clothes, and quite unshaved, as were all the men at that time, but well and fit. He had been out to the *Nile* to look for me, not knowing where I had been put. Later a list of names and the ships where different women were billeted was put up on the pier, but we landed and went to the hotel as soon as possible. They also had regular post launches running from the pier to the ships, and some people were on ships for a fortnight. Of course it was a great saving for them, as the Government had to feed them; but the *Nile* was enough for me, and I came on shore as soon as possible. L. had to live somewhere, too, once his work as Special Constable was not so strenuous, and I, of course, wished to be with him. During the night on the *Selangor*, as we were near shore, we heard lots of shooting, and about 2 A.M. so much of it that we all sat up on our mattresses on deck and listened. It was so

pretty that night, all the little boats round us with their lights lit, and a moon shining, and the shore lights twinkling too, but we were very anxious, listening to the shooting, and wondering where it was and who were then fighting.

We were always hoping to see the *Montcalm*, the French cruiser recalled by wireless, come in. We looked to her for rescue, but as events turned out the worst was over before she returned on Wednesday night, because our own volunteers and the H.M.S. *Cadmus* men had saved us. The French landed on Thursday and assisted in clearing the mutineers off, but I don't think they saw much fighting. Indeed, there was little of that after the first night and day following. The sniping continued, and the hunting down of small bodies of mutineers who were most of them too scared to come in and surrender, but had no more spirit to fight. Report says that at the beginning the mutineers heard that we had got big guns and were going to use them, so they scattered and were leaderless, which proved their undoing and our salvation. Two Jap gunboats came in, and they also landed men later on to assist, as did the Russians from a volunteer cruiser lying in harbour. The Russians had two men seriously wounded about a week after the mutiny began. We have had a French review, a Jap review, and a Russian review since, when the Governor came down and personally thanked them all for their assistance.

There were wonderfully few casualties in the fighting. Most of the deaths were caused by cold-blooded murder. The Germans were unguarded the first night, as the volunteer guards were shot by the mutineers, and all the other men had to go to protect the residents of Singapore. Some of the Germans escaped, but found life outside so unpleasant under the circumstances that they returned to their prison. About ten got clear away, D. among them, and all the *Emden* men. He is said to have reached Sumatra in a broken-down state, his feet bleeding and sore with walking through jungle. The Dutch authorities interned him, and, we were told, are very willing to give him up, but so far we cannot find enough proof to get him extradited. Some men who happened to go up to Tanglin the afternoon of the mutiny to see what was wrong, were kept by the Germans until morning for their safety. They even lent Major W., R.A.M.C., clothes, as his uniform would have been enough to kill him had the mutineers returned. After giving the Germans rifles and a sword, the sepoys went off, and the Germans afterwards refused to give them up to one of our men, but locked them up, probably thinking that they might require them should the rebels return. D. got away by boat to the Cariman Islands, and then got a Chinaman

to take him to Sumatra. Some launches with volunteers on board were out for days looking for him, but in vain. One German was caught in Singapore, very hungry and dirty, not sorry to be found. The mutineers broke into the German enclosure calling "Islam," "Islam," and shook hands with the Germans. So the Germans told one man later on.

Our letters and wires were very strictly censored. The result was that in the Federated Malay States and Penang, people heard that we were all murdered, and the town burnt down.

The women, who went on board the *Ipoh* the first night, were very much more comfortable than we were, and had no dreadful experiences. Captain D. was so good to them, they presented him with a silver bowl, "From the Refugees," to show their gratitude. However, they got their share of disagreeable experiences too, because on Friday afternoon fire broke out on the *Ipoh*, and every one had to get off in a few minutes. They were taken on to the Russian cruiser, where they had a very good time indeed.

We were not allowed to return to our house until very late, because it was in the unsafe area. The rebels had been all about it, but not in our compound. The "Kebun" found bullets in our compound, and that firing must have been done during the time we were in the house. Seventy rebels went all over the D.'s compound, and entered the next house, where they drank water, but took nothing and damaged nothing. They also went into Mount Echo, but did no damage; and then searched a Chinaman's house opposite, looking for Europeans; they would not believe him when he said that the house belonged to him. That was, of course, quite near us. They went to several houses to ask the "boys" if the "Tuans" had returned.

One mutineer was found outside Raffles' Hotel disguised as a Chinese coolie, and wearing a large straw hat. A gharry-wallah spotted him, and he was taken to the Drill Hall and recognised at once as one of the Fifth L.I. Two others were caught near the Europe Hotel, sitting on the padang by the sea. Some were found disguised as Malays, but most were caught in the jungle, hungry and miserable.

Later on there was a public execution of two mutineers, and since then many have been shot inside the jail. L., as Special Constable, had to go to the public execution. He with the others was put through a little drill before starting, so as to look more impressive to the natives. After this preliminary they marched to Sepoy Lines, and there on the bank, beside the 6th hole on the Golf Course, were thousands of natives, all creeds and colours, come to see the sight. The Volunteers and Special Constables formed a square, the

prison wall making the one side facing the crowd on the Links. The two prisoners were brought out by European warders and tied to stakes in front of the prison wall. A British officer read out their crime — of mutiny and murder, I suppose, — but L. was too far off to hear. Then a Malay interpreter read it out in Malay, and lastly a Chinaman in Chinese, the crowd listening in silence. The firing party of the M.S.V.R. men then stepped forward and fired. Some say that a wail went up from the prison, where some hundred of the Fifth L.I. were imprisoned. Others that it was a shout of defiance. The one man dropped at once, the other remained rigidly upright, although the bullets had entered his heart and he was dead. They fired again, and he slowly sank down. It was found that his clothes had been caught by something on the stake he was tied to, and his muscles had remained very rigid; but people say it was horrible to see it. One Malay policeman and a European fainted, but L. and most men say they saw it all without a qualm, and that it was very well done.

TALES OF A GASPIPE OFFICER.

BY "DESPATCH RIDER."

Military cyclists are popularly known as the Gaspipe Cavalry.—*Daily Paper.*

I. PROLOGUE.

THE village of St Jans, which is in French Flanders a mile or so from the Belgian Frontier, contains an *estaminet* that, to the best of my remembrance, has no name beyond the proprietor's, and the name of the proprietor cannot be pronounced and is never remembered. This *estaminet* almost faces the well-known *Maison Commune Estaminet* and the huge convent which in February 1915, both before and after, was filled with wounded and sick men and officers, who, for the most part, played good bridge.

In the main room of the nameless *estaminet* were living three officers, Bill, and M'Queen, and Jumbo. M'Queen, who was a captain, commanded the Divisional Cyclist Company. Bill, who was also a captain, and Jumbo, ruled platoons. There was a third platoon with no officer. So the Gaspipe Officer walked down one evening from the top of the hill, reported himself to M'Queen, and, instead of eating, sleeping, and having his being in a tiny room together with five others, found himself an officer and a gentleman with a servant to wait upon him and thirty odd men of his own. . . .

It was a famous Company. Before Mons it had pedalled in triumphantly from a successful little affair of outposts. It had waited for the Germans when some squadrons of a famous regiment had ridden through it in despair. Every day and every night of the Great Retreat it had kept unwinking guard on the rear of the Division. The men of the Company had never tired and had never been driven in. Then the Division advanced with the Cyclists merrily ahead of it. On the Marne they had rounded up a hundred and fifty German Guardsmen, and brought in eighty, although shelled by their own guns—they were then not sixty strong. On the Aisne they were out every night patrolling a sensitive sector of the line, and, near La Bassée, held as a mobile reserve, they were twice thrown against the German attack, and they stayed the attack. The Division went north. Every man was hurled into the firing line for the defence of Ypres. The Cyclists were put into the trenches at Hooge, and there they lost their commanding officer, a very gallant gentleman, who, being seriously wounded, passed through hos-

pitals until he came home. And in February 1915 the Company was patrolling miles of wire and making innumerable fascines. . . .

It was a famous Company. Also, it was a comfortable *estaminet*. The new officer nervously drew in his chair to the great blaze of the fire and ordered a drink. He thought without regret of the tiny stuffy room and Grimers laboriously frying a dab over a smoking, evil-smelling stove.

II. NIGHT-LIFE IN PARIS.

It was M'Queen that raised the point.

"You know, my dear Gaspipe, you were filthy and unshorn. Since you've become an officer, you've made attempts. . . . You have shaved, and, so far as I can see, you are clean. But I really can't have one of my officers going about in the tattered kit of a corporal. We'll try the Div."

M'Queen was right. And there was a further difficulty. The callow sub. had been a brother-in-arms to the men he was now supposed to command. He had sung choruses to the vile songs of Foster, that very Yorkshireman. He had been given tea at all times, and in all places. Jock, the Company tailor, was an honoured and frequent guest of the Despatch Riders' Mess. Had he not empurpled many an evening? A few days before the Cyclists had entertained their future despot to a fine meal — and odorous memories of Croucher and his pork chop still lingered. A little leave of absence and a lot of new kit might solve the difficulties of discipline.

The Div. was tried and found wanting. No leave—and kit to be obtained through Ordnance. But the Gaspipe Officer possessed certain physical peculiarities for which Ordnance had never allowed.

The idea was Jumbo's.

[Jumbo is a Territorial officer of fabulous girth, energy, and language. He had spent the early days of the war fiercely defending the coast of Yorkshire, and he filled us with such tales of day and night work without rest or food that we all firmly believed the real heroes of this war had never fired a shot—except at spying bushes in a doubtful light.]

"Paris is not so far from St Jans. It can be reached by rail or motor-cycle. He has a pass and can get a motor-cycle. Send him to Paris for his kit!"

The Sergeant of the Despatch Riders, old Huggie, saw the point of the argument and turned a blind eye as the young officer prepared his old motor-cycle for a long journey. Then it began to rain, so the man who had been compelled to ride by night and day in every kind of weather sighed for softer methods of journeying.

Finally Tommy took him to Bailleul in the side-car. A supply train left for Paris at 6.30 P.M. There was interval for a good dinner and a final toast at the *Canon d'Or*.

It was strange to wait on Bailleul platform for the Paris train. The guns had ceased their grumbling, for the darkness had fallen and protective day had fled to let loose the night's grim little battles. There is night-life beyond Wulverghem, and there is night-life in Paris. That was one of the obvious thoughts that flew into the Gaspipe Officer's head, for a platform beckons obvious thoughts. And the black trucks, like cows in Sussex, stood round patiently, filled with things for those men beyond Wulverghem. . . .

The Train Officer was kindly but irritable, and he wanted a Mess President; for, though he travelled between Bailleul and Rouen or Boulogne (there are good shops in these towns), he dined off a Maconochie. He also played Bridge, and entertained his fellow-passengers with the complaint that, such were the hardships of his exigent service, he had been unable to obtain more than one rubber or so a week. He had a respect, though, for the combatant, and listened with open mouth to a Cyclist and an Infantry Officer swopping yarns.

The first-class carriage was luxurious. As they dozed the combatants heard the murmur of his voice:—

"Simpkins doubled, but we ran out with one to spare. But it's so rarely one gets the opportunity on this rotten job—is it very wet in the trenches just now . . .?"

The old supply train jogged on very, very slowly. There were occasional shoutings—the seats extraordinarily comfortable. . . .

Amiens! Amiens!

The Gaspipe Officer stood sleepily on the platform, watched the old supply train flounder out of sight, then turned instinctively to the Restaurant. War or no war, it is the ἔργον of Amiens Restaurant to produce good breakfasts and hurried drinks when the Paris Express has a moment to spare. The waiter was old and the cashier was ugly, but the omelette was good.

Once started it is easy to journey from Bailleul to Paris. A train marked PARIS came in, so without further ado he took his seat, and, though the pass he carried did not possess sufficient stamps and signatures to forward a cat from Clapham Junction to Earlsfield, the Cyclist Officer was not questioned.

There was no getting away from the war. At one place and another neat batteries of seventy-fives were drawn up in green fields, German prisoners, seemingly cheerful, were working in the yards, and dear old Frenchmen, with beards as long as their bayonets, stood impatiently on guard.

The pass proved sufficient to enter Paris, and Paris smelt the same as ever, when the Cyclist drove to his favourite hotel in Montparnasse.

At first Paris seemed little different to the Paris he had known. Men in mufti still walked about the streets, and the *Taverne Royale* was as superlative as it had ever been. So while his uniform was being made, he went to the correspondent of a famous English daily and to an American artist.

The correspondent said nothing but asked much. The Cyclist remembered that he had been a Despatch Rider, and told many tales, of which a few fringed the truth.

The American artist lived in a delectable studio with his sister. They began about the war, talking of those worthy citizens who had fled to Bordeaux and shamefacedly returned; of the true and spurious widows that flocked the boulevards; of life in the trenches and the cause of it all; of Nursing and Art and the high price of food; of the models who were starving in the streets. Then wisely they abandoned war, and led the Cyclist through simple pleasures. It was a dream.

Mistily he remembers now the lobster and the artichoke at the *Clou*—an old thin man sang patriotic songs in a cracked voice and everybody laughed—with the fine walk back from Montmartre to Montparnasse. No one walks abroad in Paris now late of nights, and Paris is really dark; but the sleepy gendarmes smiled at "brav' Tommie," and let him go by.

Then there was the cosmopolitan tea-party with Marice, where French, American, and Roumanian met, and all proved more insular than the Briton. . . .

The dream becomes wilder and stranger, a very proper meal for the fancy of a young officer caged in an exiguous dug-out—afterwards she chewed the memory of Polaire, coldly untamed, chanting a too passionate song. At the Grand Guignol he sat between a corpulent general and a girl in black, each of whom would interpret the jokes confusedly. Add a tiresome walk to see the misty dawn from St Sulpice: the dawn was veiled with clouds, but the breakfast was good.

The maddest scene was the brown interior of a dilapidated cabaret in Montmartre, wherein Marice and her friends were giving a cheap and satisfying meal to artists and models for little or nothing. It was the opening night of the *Cantine des Humoristes*. The walls, covered with obscure drawings, rattled to their laughter. A fat poet sweated well with modest excitement, as in tones of screaming admiration he recited verses that praised vividly the charge of the British Lancers at the Marne. A squat-nosed Russian sang unintelligible ballads that had roaring choruses — and some-

body's daughter danced. At the farther end of the room a monstrous wooden crucifix, wonderfully carved, stretched its kind shadow over a humorist and his model, who, replete with mirth and unexpected food, slept smilingly with gaunt faces touching. And through the half-open door, to complete the fantastic show, a crescent moon gazed in over the crenellated roof of a black and ruinous stable.

The dream continued. The Cyclist and his friends raced down the steps away from a worthy American girl who was solemnly collecting autographs, and two hospital orderlies of the same tribe, who stood husky with admiration for the British, to a lady that was said to smoke opium, and certainly preferred bull-pups to children. She was charming in her pink flannel dressing-gown, but received them with so transparent a hospitality and so cold a kindness that they left her in haste and, talking of the Hippogriff and other famous beasts, walked cheerily over the river to the studio. There they talked theories of art until the day dawned.

The uniform became rapidly ready, but it is easier to enter Paris than to leave her. It was only after interviewing countless railway officials that, coming at last to an ancient and sympathetic staff officer, the magic word "Mons" produced a pass. So, early one morning, Marice as the Cyclist's sweetheart, and the American artist and sister as his brother and cousin, were admitted to see the last of the Boulogne Express. . . .

An officer lucky enough after seven months in Flanders to find himself in Paris should make curious investigations into the state of the city and its gains and losses in time of war. It would have been interesting to compare London in December with Paris in February, for surely the observer should be unprejudiced, having seen neither city since the war began. Yet, I ask you, coming to Paris from Bailleul, how could Paris be other than a dream?

Paris seemed less calm and more sensitive than London. There was an eager and hourly anxiety — it was not fearful but rather a tightly strained interest — and THE WAR was not a great shadow to be avoided by pleasuring, or a subject as threadbare as the weather. In Paris a man never says, "What is happening in the war?" or "How are things going on in Flanders?" But rather, with a vivid acceptance of the phrase, "How did we do yesterday?" In London war is an entity outside man's life. It has an objective existence of its own. In Paris the fact and thought of war have become an actual part of life. It definitely flavours everything. London is at war—Paris is in the war.

Yet in some ways Paris has become curiously British. In February, the Parisians were ceasing to wonder at, and were beginning to understand, Lon-

don's "More pleasure than ever." 'La Vie Parisienne' and more important journals were beginning to joke at London's assumption of the traditional French gaiety and the Parisians' assumption of the traditional London sobriety. So, though the artists were starving—*Bal Bullier* is a barracks and *Colorossi's* is shut—Paris awoke like a tired woman and wearily made herself gay.

And Paris vies with London in its suppression of enthusiasm. The Cyclist stood in front of the Madeleine and watched a battalion swing down the boulevards and into the Rue Royale. There was no cheering—only a rare self-ashamed shout, for this war is not a gasconading enterprise. In France, when sons or fathers go to the war they are not heard of for months and months. So the parade of soldiers is to many the parade of ghosts. . . .

The Express came to Boulogne late in the afternoon. The journey had not been dull, for the train was filled with American correspondents and French staff officers in their horizon-blue uniforms, who chattered with interest at the sight of prisoners and war material, or when the train barely crept over a newly repaired bridge. At lunch a friendly captain sat opposite the Cyclist, told him what was happening down Festubert way, and invited him to proceed from Boulogne in the car of a friendly interpreter.

Boulogne was unsatisfactory, as it always is in war-time, for Boulogne is neither Home nor Front. It overflows with ambulance drivers, and strayed officers, and men of mark in the I.M.S., who seem without work, and delicious nurses in delectable oilskins who flock the tea-shops and gladden the heart and eyes of a returning officer. Going on leave—Boulogne is only a place in which the bus or train stops a few hundred yards from the ship. To the wounded it may be a hellish or heavenly caravanserai, as the wound is light or serious—a purgatory for the convalescent on light duty, a space surrounding a Board of Officers who determine whether you may or may not be granted sick-leave at home.

The Cyclist and his friend, the captain from Festubert, determinedly looked for the brighter side of Boulogne, and went near to finding it. Tea was at a tea-shop filled with I.M.S. and nurses. Then the interpreter and car arrived and they went to dinner, but outside the restaurant the Cyclist had seen a Staff Car of his own Division. This proved to be important, because there was little or no room for the Cyclist in the interpreter's car. An artist, fat, and with a certain enthusiasm, had come to Boulogne, and desired to paint battles at Armentières, —a simple wish. He was a friend of the interpreter, and the interpreter was stationed at Armentières.

So the Cyclist went in search of the Staff Car and found Grimers, who with his usual

tenacious pursuit after pleasure, had come into Boulogne on the car to buy fish for the Despatch Riders. Just after dawn—it was bitterly cold—the car called for the Gaspipe Officer. It was tricky driving, because the roads were frozen and the tyres were steel-studded. At St Omer they learned that Grimers had been given a commission, and beyond Cassel they knew certainly that the Canadian Division had arrived, because its immense green transport was woefully in the way. Before Caestre the clutch began to slip, and finally in front of that white farm where the Divisional Train used to make its headquarters — half-way between Bailleul and St Jans —the engine that had been doing much work with no result found it could not heave the car out of a rut. So the Cyclist took up his baggage and walked.

In the main room of the *estaminet* Bill, Jumbo, and M'Queen sat over the fire in earnest consultation. When he entered M'Queen looked relieved, and, smiling uneasily, said—

"Glad you're back; thought the Division was beginning to smell a rat. Anyway, we've got some excellent news to welcome you home with."

"What's up?"

"The Cyclists," he read, "will take their turn with the Divisional Cavalry in garrisoning the trenches."

Jumbo, for no reason at all, roared with laughter.

III. NIGHT-LIFE BEYOND WULVERGHEM.

It is no joke at all for Cyclists to be put in the trenches; trenchcraft cannot be learnt in a night. Cyclists have neither the knowledge, the experience, nor the appliances. Jumbo laughed, because, for many strenuous years a Territorial and for many packed months on home defence, he was at last to see real war. He talked boldly of listening-posts and crawling up to the German wire, but the Gaspipe Officer was filled with dread. The Despatch Riders whom he had left jeered at him, and pointed out—it was argument unanswerable—that the coming together of the trenches, his ignorance, and his physical eccentricities, would result in certain death. George said it was a shame. To put the Gaspipe in the trenches was simply to make a present of a might-be valuable officer to Fritz or Hans, or whomsoever the sniper of the day might be.

The cause of it all had occurred further up the Line. A Division composed of foreign service battalions had arrived and taken over from the French. This Division was handicapped in many ways. First, a man who has been stationed at Hong-Kong, and then for a month or two at Winchester, cannot feel marvellously comfortable in

Flemish trenches during a wet spring, even if his health does not actually suffer. Second, the trenches which this Division took over were, I am told, downright bad trenches. The Germans, knowing all this, attacked vigorously. So two of our war-worn brigades were sent up north to restore the balance of power. This they did effectively and quickly; but in the meantime two very weak brigades came south to hold our sector of the line, which was comparatively quiet. They were so weak that the Cyclists had to go to their rescue.

Now the trenches of Flanders are known almost as well as the hotels. The *Faucon* and the *Canon d'Or* are familiar to many. So is trench 10*b* *Support*. It is still, I believe, a comfortable and satisfactory trench. It was in February last—and the Cyclists rejoiced when they were bidden to garrison this trench and 10*a*, another quite healthy ditch. The trenches themselves were safe. Casualties usually occurred going in or coming out.

The Divisional Cavalry, who were sportsmen, took the first shift, and lost enough men to make their Major tear his hair, for valuable N.C.O.'s trained in the work of Divisional Cavalry are not easy to replace. . . .

The evening came. M'Queen and the Gaspipe, cheered by a supper of champagne and oysters—for who can make a better Mess President than an ex-Despatch Rider?—embarked on waggons with half the Company, and slowly trundled along on bad and desolate roads towards the trenches. It was not raining, but the air was chill and dank. Dranoutre, never a cheerful village, looked like a melancholy dog that had come out of the water but forgotten to shake itself. The shattered trees cast dreary shadows. The men, who had been singing, became quiet and whispered among themselves.

Behind a slight, purple ridge ahead of them the pistol-lights were whizzing up and rifles crackled almost merrily. They disembarked near a little *estaminet*, and, while the men took their tea from a borrowed field-kitchen, M'Queen and the Gaspipe swilled down many cups of *café-cognac*, admired the baby, and endeavoured to understand how many brothers, sons, and fathers of our hostess were serving. There was a filthy old man there, too, who cheered us by recounting the feats of German snipers.

At length they started off—M'Queen leading and the Gaspipe bringing up the rear. They crossed the top of the ridge and marched down a path which is marked on the map as being open to the enemy's fire. A few "overs" whirred harmlessly by and the Cyclists felt almost brave.

Now, although the Cyclists were quite convinced that the Germans were filled only with the thought that the Cyclists were coming, the facts were that there were other troops

also on the road and that it was very dark. The Gaspipe halted his platoon in the rear of some shadowy figures, and only after some minutes discovered that these figures had nothing to do with him. So he hurried on and caught up M'Queen in the main street of a ruinous village. There M'Queen told the men what to do. They were not to be frightened of stray bullets and duck. They were to bury their faces in the mud when the lights went up. It was easy to talk, but the village rustled uneasily with the zeep-zeep-ping of the bullets and multitudinous little crashes as they flew through the broken walls.

"I doan't loike this—place," murmured a man from Suffolk, and one officer at least agreed with him.

Again they forged on along a winding and slippery path. The zeeping grew more furious, and the Gaspipe, ducking his head to one that seemed viciously near, hoped that the darkness covered his sin and endeavoured to believe the obvious, — you cannot hear the bullet which hits you. So they stumbled forward, and having passed the stretch in which the Cavalry had suffered, grew more cheerful.

At last a weary — "Halt. Wait here. It's dead ground."

It was dead ground — a flattish slope of black mud pockmarked with shell-holes and lined with tiny streams. On either side were little groups of withered trees and bushes. Over the ridge were much light and noise—for all the world like Port Meadow Fair before you cross the bridge. Instead of the shouting and the music of the merry-go-rounds you heard the uproar of the rifles and the machine-guns. And the lights threw a sickly yellow glare upon every tree and bush and man.

M'Queen returned and led the way—planks over streams, round shell-holes, and finally into a muddy ditch which was crowded with men. This was 10*b* *Support*.

"Here's your dug-out," said the officer in charge hurriedly, eager to get away. "It's rather damp, but quite cushy. I've left some bread and *pâté-de-foie-gras*. There's plenty of room for the men. The guard-room is here, and this is where you put your sentries. That's all — oh, one moment. There's a live shell just behind the parados. Don't tickle it—and Fritz enfilades this trench at a height of about 5 ft. 4 in. That's him! Keep down. Good-night."

Thus the Gaspipe Officer was left in charge of 10*b* *Support*. He gave a few hurried orders, crawled into his dug-out, and determined to stop there until he was relieved. He disliked Fritz intensely.

The dug-out was constructed, like most dug-outs, of sand-bags filled in with Flanders mud which is a bad imitation of clay. The floor was of beaten earth. The length of it was five feet, the width three, and the height about two. Every inch of it was dripping, but inside a sleeping-sack

spread on the top of a ground-sheet life was tolerable, though no arrangement could keep the dripping off the face.

He had just snuggled into the sleeping-sack when a *chit* was brought from M'Queen—"Come and look me up."

He slid out of the dug-out with a curse, and, climbing wearily over a gap in the parados, was led by a friendly corporal to 10*a*, where the Cyclists supported by a machine-gun section of Queen Vic's were engaged in what M'Queen called "obtaining a moral superiority over the Huns." Going back to his own trench, the Gaspipe slipped into a shell-hole, and he was very damp when he reached the comfort and shelter of his own dug-out. . . .

He slept soundly, and was wakened at dawn with the report that all was quiet along our front. It was a fine morning after the rain, and the birds sang cheerily. So here was he, a microscopic entity, in charge of one of those trenches, which stretch, as everybody knows, from the North Sea to Switzerland. Behind him was the dark hill covered sparsely with derelict trees. Eighty yards in front—you could see them safely through a certain loop-hole—were low-lying yellowish mounds faced with odd bits of wire and little heaps of grey. These were the German trenches—and the fact was not thrilling. Very occasionally rifles were fired: you would have thought they were fired at random if you had not listened to the ping of Fritz's bullet down the trench. And in the afternoon a few shells screamed like sea-gulls overhead.

So the troubled night came again. About eleven there were several sharp bursts of fire. The Gaspipe Officer grasped his revolver and wondered how on earth he was going to reinforce 10*a*. He would be quite certain to fall into something on the way there. Before those Great Pushes that occur with such a lamentable frequency men do reach a high enthusiasm (it is given for the balancing of an enormous and immediate Death), but down "on the range," even when the surroundings are unfamiliar, the little emotions of nervousness, not fear, and miserableness, not misery, and a wee helping fellow called humour, creep into the dug-outs. The worst of war is that it is so rarely heroic. There are so few occasions which inspire a man to write a really fine letter.

M'Queen in 10*a* had never needed the help of the troubled officer in 10*b Support*. The "moral superiority" had been gained at the cost of much ammunition, and the Germans were aware—to look at the matter fairly and squarely—that new and green troops were in the trench opposite them. Besides, M'Queen had a telephone and knew everything that was going on up and down and behind the line. He also had a machine-gun.

The morning broke to a gorgeous day. Even the walls of the dug-out dripped less rapidly, and high in the heavens a lark sang with full glory. The German gunners

began to try and hit Neuve Eglise, and the British artillery, longing for some excuse to unlock their stores of ammunition, determined to *strafe* the Germans' trenches and some villages behind the German line. The show began about half-past eleven with big guns, little guns, and all sorts of guns. Even "Granny," a howitzer quite as effective as any German, let out with one of her elephantine shells, which chortled through the air like an express passing through a tunnel beneath you, and brought down a church with everything near it. The field-guns banged and whizzed away at the trenches in front; it was a display more frightful than effective, for shrapnel burst on percussion does not do any great damage even to badly-constructed trenches. The Germans replied mildly with some shrapnel that burst two hundred yards beyond 10*b* *Support*. No one, except the Germans, knew exactly for what it was meant. Certainly no harm was done. When the morning's shelling was over, one of our aeroplanes flew along the trenches to inspect the result. The Germans were so intent on firing at it that M'Queen and his men, disregarding the aeroplane, fired at the Germans. One of the cyclists reported that a second after firing he had heard a German scream.

The Gaspipe Officer had been told that the work of him who is in charge of a support trench consists in keeping man and trench fit and dry. The man was the difficulty. The bottom of the trench was covered with nine inches of water, so planks raised on little piers had been laid along it and just above the surface of the water. The men, disregarding his advice and example, considered trench-life a huge joke, and gallivanting along the greasy boards, splashed splendidly into the water. Again, everybody knows that to get out of a Wulverghem trench in broad daylight and walk about behind it is to challenge a remarkably swift death. Yet two of his men did it and survived. Truly, the life of the cyclist is charmed!

To keep the trench dry and fit was not a difficulty, because it was impossible. A little digging might have been done: in fact it ought to have been done. But he had only once before been to the trenches—a fearful night, on which he had volunteered to help lay a wire, or rather watch a wire being laid from battalion headquarters to a fire-trench—and he knew so little about trenches that he dared not make a change. He might disturb something that had a name and was very useful. To exhume a gabion would be indeed a crime. . . .

So the afternoon wore on, and the evening came when he was to be relieved by the eager Jumbo—and his courage failed him. Jumbo would not sit in a dug-out all the time. Jumbo would dig a new trench after he had improved the old. Jumbo would wander fearlessly up and down the slippery plank, careless of Fritz's cupro-

nickel jibes, and hurl foul language at the Hun. For the rest of time Jumbo would be the warrior and the Gaspipe the craven in the hearts and mouths of the Company.

It was now quite dark, and still Jumbo did not come. Reliefs are always too late for the relieved and too early for the reliever: it is a curious temporal axiom. At last a message arrived from M'Queen:—

"Leave your men in charge of Ray and wait for me at the solitary tree."

He scrambled with care through a gap in the parados, and slipping hastily over the black mud, walked with light heart to the solitary tree. The night was pitch-black. There was a low murmur of voices and the slop-slup of men marching over the mud. Then a pistol-light would flare up and the dead ground appear alive with black, stumbling files of men, some burdened with rations and water-bottles, some carrying loaded stretchers, some halted waiting to be guided in, and others tired but joyful coming out, very softly whistling. Soon a little party marched smartly up to the solitary tree — the remaining half-company with Jumbo and Bill, Jumbo almost silent and tense. Soon they left, going trenchwards, and again the Gaspipe waited. The Devil's Fair it was—with its light and music — for sometime those low-lying yellowish mounds must be shattered to destruction by our guns, while the crowded men wait in 10*b* *Support* and 10*a*, and rush in a great charge. That will be but the beginning, for behind the German trenches a falsely gentle slope rises to the ridge of Messines.

M'Queen came along with his men, and together they tramped to the ruinous village. The path was quiet that night. Quite comfortably they reached the top of the hill and embarked on their borrowed waggons. It was bitterly cold, and they were delayed by an ambulance which could not be passed until they came to a soft place where the ambulance might draw aside easily; but the men, led by Jock the Tailor, sang all the songs they knew, beginning with the more innocent and finishing with the more crude. By the time they had reached the turning to Croix de Poperinghe all was silent except for a muffled curse at the cold. Four hours in a G.S. waggon on a freezing night is no pleasing journey.

The men were dismissed. M'Queen and the Gaspipe hurried to the nameless *estaminet*, where the inimitable Bland had a roaring fire going and a long and steaming dinner. . . .

When Jumbo returned three days later, the Gaspipe waited for an epic narrative, but Jumbo was short in his reply:—

"Eh? I just lay close in that darned dug-out until somebody relieved me."

(*To be continued.*)

THE BOYS' BATTLE.

A FEATURE of modern warfare has been the burden of responsibility laid upon the shoulders of the very young. In England we have never seen this apotheosis of youth exemplified on so huge a scale as we see it now; but Germany has known it before, and it is an old story in France, whose boys fell at Lützen and Bautzen, and were cut down in hundreds, when they would not surrender, at La Fère Champenoise. And there is one English-speaking community that has sent the whole of its able-bodied boyhood into battle. The Secessionist States of the American Union fought with a conscript army almost from the beginning; and their sacrifice is measured in Sherman's epigram, which is more true than most epigrams are. As the human and picturesque aspects of war are usually abandoned in this country to journalists and other people without conscience, it is not likely that one in a thousand of those who are now studying for commissions in the New Armies has ever heard of Newmarket and Lexington in Virginia. Yet the story of the Lexington cadets is one that touches very closely the lives and ambitions of our officers in embryo; for if this country were invaded, it is conceivable that the cadets of Woolwich and Sandhurst, and the members of such training corps as the Inns of Court, might be mobilised as units to take their place in the last line of defence.

There is a little town in the Shenandoah Valley called by the homely name of Newmarket. Some seventy miles south-west of Newmarket, and also in the Valley, is Lexington, where Lee and Jackson are buried. And Lexington (which must not be confounded with the more famous town of the same name in Massachusetts) is the home of the Virginia Military Institute, whence two hundred and fifty boys marched out to Newmarket, just over half a century ago, to do battle with Major-General Franz Sigel and his Germans.

The Military Institute at Lexington, Virginia, was founded in 1839 as the private enterprise of a rich State. It was, perhaps, a symptom of that independent attitude in the South which, twenty years later, was to culminate in the War of Secession. The wealthy aristocracy of Virginia, a caste with military tastes and traditions, founded what was, in effect, a college in opposition to the national institution at West Point, and in so doing deserved well in after years of the Confederated States.

The Institute was originally housed in a large, three-storied, crenellated structure, with towers at the corners—a place very like the sham castle of

some rich English parvenu. Round about it were wooden buildings: dormitories, mess-rooms, stores, stables, and so on. It stood in a pleasant park planted with trees, and faced the village of Lexington. A few miles to the east ran the Blue Ridge, separating the Valley from the rest of Virginia; and about as far away to the west was Little North Mountain. Staunton, the nearest point on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, which played so important a part in the campaigns in that region, lay some thirty miles up the Valley.

The Superintendent of the Institute was Colonel Francis H. Smith, a graduate of West Point, who held brevet rank as Major-General in the Confederate Army during the war. He had a large staff of professors and assistants, among whom, when hostilities broke out, were Jackson himself and his Adjutant-General, Major Massie. The great commander fought his first campaign, from Harper's Ferry to Bull Run, in the grey uniform of the Institute.

The number of cadets varied between 300 and 400, the regulation age for entrance being sixteen. They formed four companies of infantry, a troop of cavalry, and a battery. Their dress uniform—a very smart affair—included a grey tunic with forty-four brass buttons, white trousers, and a polished shako with a pom-pom or plume. The infantry carried heavy Austrian rifles, and the battery consisted of six 3-in. rifled iron guns. In normal times the United States regular army was so small that West Point supplied almost as many officers as were needed; and the later military experience of the Lexington boys was confined usually to service with the State militia. Some parents, indeed, sent their sons to the Institute for the general education alone. But with the culmination of the secession movement in open rebellion, all this was changed in an hour. The guns of Sumter rang in a new and more glorious epoch for the foundation. Providing as it did the chief—for a time the only—training-ground for the commissioned ranks of a large and growing army, it sprang into a position of immense importance. Almost the whole of the cadets in residence at the time, with such of their instructors as were fit for military service, were drafted out immediately to various Confederate regiments. During the early months General Smith himself was absent, organising the new rebel forces. And until the end the Institute was a medium through which a constant stream of candidates, incoming and outgoing, was maintained. Even with the destruction of its buildings, after the battle we shall describe, its activities did not cease, for the classes resumed their work in some almshouses — a singular home for the propagation of the arts of war.

Lexington was so far down the Valley that for three years it remained immune from the

actual touch of battle; but the reverberations of the conflict sounded always close at hand, and its portents were ever present in the buildings of the Institute. Wounded students passed a portion of their sick-leave in its precincts: others, permanently disabled, returned as instructors; and some came back to die. Jackson was brought there mortally wounded from Chancellorsville. And twice, before their great day, the turn of events called out the boys themselves, as a unit, to take the field against the enemy. In May 1862 they marched out to help Jackson at MacDowell, but found he had already beaten Milroy when they got there; and in the late summer of the following year they took part in a fruitless chase of the Federal cavalry under Averell, who had been raiding down the Valley. Between such adventures as these, with the echoes of battles not far distant continually in their ears, the boys found even their abbreviated courses at the Institute too long. In letters home they begged to be taken away and allowed to enlist. "Good boys," says one of them, "became bad ones to secure dismissal, and as the result of these conspiracies regular hegiras would occur." At length, in the penultimate year of the Confederacy, when its armies were shrunk by capture, death, and desertion, when its credit was gone and its early end, to all unbiassed eyes, was certain, Major-General Sigel came down the Valley, and the cadet corps was called upon a third time, and in earnest.

All those who have read of the war must be familiar with the configuration of the Shenandoah Valley. It runs from south-west to north-east, a great trough between the Blue Ridge and the Shenandoah Mountains, with the Massanuttons, ending in Little North Mountain opposite Lexington, splitting it longitudinally down the middle; and it points like a gun at Pennsylvania, the communications of Washington, and the vital commercial cities of the North. It attracted the minds of the Washington authorities like a magnet, so that every hostile movement in the Valley threw them into a fever for the safety of the capital. Upon this instrument Lee and Jackson had played most skilfully, not once but many times. It decided the first battle of the war, fought far away at Bull Run: it postponed and (by the General's own account) ruined M'Clellan's great offensive; and both of Lee's invasions of Maryland started from the Valley. On the other hand, although less vital to the Confederacy, for its direction trended away from the precious railways that supplied the Army of Northern Virginia, its fertile lowlands provided Lee with food and men, and he could not with equanimity watch its permanent occupation by the Federals. As time went on, however, and his army shrank and no successor to Jackson arose among his subordinates,

he was able no longer to use the Valley for large strategical schemes, and found a difficulty even in keeping there an adequate force of troops. Only the marked incompetence of the Federal commanders in the district saved it for so long to the Confederacy.

In the spring of 1864 Major-General Breckinridge commanded the Confederate army in the Valley. It could scarcely be called an army, for he had with him only the infantry brigades of Wharton and Echols, Imboden's cavalry, and three or four batteries—in all, upwards of 5000 men. Lee, anticipating a new Federal movement from Winchester, higher up the Valley, had ordered the Adjutant-General of Virginia to scrape up every man he could to send to Breckinridge; and his letter being forwarded to Smith at the Military Institute, that officer put himself under his colleague's orders. In point of fact, he ranked Breckinridge in the service. He informed the latter that the cadet corps then numbered 280, of whom 250 were fit for active service; that horses had been impressed in case of need; that he had abundance of ammunition, tents, knapsacks, shovels, and picks; and that the corps was prepared to march at a moment's notice. At this time Imboden was about to put up a telegraph line between the Institute and the Major-General's headquarters at Staunton, but the project was not carried out when the call came.

Away up the Valley at Winchester was the Federal Major-General Franz Sigel, a German. He had collected about 8500 men, including Sullivan's complete division, the brigades of Moor, Thorburn, and Tibbits, Julius Stabel's cavalry brigade, and 30 guns. A large proportion of his men were Germans. He moved out from Winchester in the first days of May, and news of the advance reached Breckinridge on the 9th or 10th. The Confederate General knew himself to be seriously outnumbered, and believed, as generals always do and will, that the disproportion was more marked than it proved to be. In fact, his own veterans were accustomed to odds, and Sigel's force was not composed of the best material. Breckinridge, however, feeling that every man and boy would count, ordered the Lexington cadets to report to him at Staunton.

His orderly arrived at Lexington about midnight on the 10th. At once the drummers in the guard-room beat the long roll: the cadets scrambled out of bed and fell in on the parade-ground; and the Adjutant read the orders by lantern light. There was to be no more sleep that night for any man or boy at the Institute.

The corps paraded again at 7 A.M., 250 strong: four weak companies of infantry and a section of 3 guns. In the transport were 500 lb. of blockade-run bacon, tasting, as the boys averred, of tar, as much beef as could be packed

in as well, and 100 bushels of corn. Each cadet carried forty rounds of ammunition. The uniforms, that before the war had vied in glitter and smartness with those of West Point, were now in most cases coarse grey tunics and trousers, with a black tape stripe, and forage caps — those crushed képis common to both sides. Overcoats were worn rolled. The equipment consisted of haversack and strap, bayonet, canteen, water-bottle, leather belt and cartridge box. The battalion colour, a white silk flag on which was embroidered a portrait of Washington, was carried by Ensign Evans, a conspicuous figure among the boys, for he stood six feet two.

Smith, unfortunately, was ill, and the command devolved on Colonel Scott Ship. As that officer rode out upon the parade-ground, where the corps was drawn up in column of companies, its intervals and dressing perfect, its colour drooping in the still air, the grey of its uniforms barely to be distinguished against the dawn, he may well have felt misgiving as well as pride. For that parade has probably no parallel. Except for Ship himself, Professor-Captain H. A. Wise, second in command, and perhaps half a dozen more, there was not a full-grown man in the ranks. Some of the plebes, as they were called, of the previous autumn, who had passed their squad and company drill, paraded with the rest. During the war the age regulation had been evaded or strained, and there were children of fifteen among those who marched from the Institute that day.

The horses for the guns and transport were slow in coming in, and the infantry marched off without them; but they joined the column later in the morning. The corps arrived at Staunton at midday on the 12th, and went into camp south of the town. The boys came in for a good deal of chaff from Breckinridge's veterans, but consoled themselves with the unstinted admiration of the members of the girls' schools that abounded in Staunton. That night it began to rain, and it was raining still when, at dawn on the 13th, the little army, now complete, moved off along the Harrisonburg road. The cadets marched in rear of Echols's brigade. Harrisonburg, eighteen miles from Staunton, was reached that night; and another sixteen miles the next day brought them to Lacy's Springs, ten miles south of Newmarket. It had rained most of the time, and the weather showed no sign of clearing. At Lacy's Springs the tired boys had hoped for another night's rest, but at midnight they were roused again. They set off at 1.30 in a torrential downpour, and at 6 o'clock the rattle of musketry was heard in front. It was the mounted skirmishers of the advance-guard engaged with the Federal outposts south of Newmarket.

It was apparently the in-

tention of Breckinridge to seize the little town before his opponent. Sigel, however, was already there in force, and the Confederates halted for two or three hours, deployed on either side of the turnpike. The cadets were in reserve, with Edgar's battalion. Breckinridge had informed Ship that he did not wish to use the boys, but would do so freely if it was necessary.

Newmarket lies in the western branch of the Valley, a few miles due west of Luray Gap, in the Massanutton Range. It was held by the Federal centre. Their left extended through some orchards to Smith's Creek, at the foot of the mountains, and their right was holding a sunken lane with a stone wall that ran westward from the town to the north fork of the Shenandoah river. Their artillery was posted on rising ground behind, with one battery in the churchyard of Newmarket.

In Luray Gap were Confederate observers and signallers, who had the whole battlefield spread like a map below them; and they could see Sigel's rearmost battalions still toiling down the pike some miles away from the position. This news, semaphored to Breckinridge, determined him to take the offensive. Hitherto he seems to have been undecided, and half expecting the Federals to advance. There was now a chance of driving them from the town before their concentration was complete. He had deployed his force originally in one line, with Echols and the cavalry on the right, the 62nd Virginia Infantry (and possibly some other corps, forming by one account a third brigade under Patton) in the centre, and Wharton on the left. This disposition was now altered. Two lines were formed: Wharton in the first, Echols in the second, with the Lexington boys the last battalion but one on Echols's left. The cadets' three guns, unable to follow the infantry over the broken ground west of the pike, were ordered to report to M'Laughlin's battery on the road.

It was about eleven o'clock, and still raining, when the advance began. The day was a Sunday. The country toward Newmarket was open, with a slight rise that had concealed the Confederate deployment and for some time hid the advancing line. Breckinridge's cavalry pushed out along Smith's Creek, in an endeavour to turn the Federal left, while the guns opened on the town. Wharton's brigade, a long line of grey, moved forward rapidly, and presently came under shrapnel fire; and at 12.30, Echols and the cadets, following 250 yards behind in line of columns of battalions, topped the rise and began to receive the shells in their ranks. A few hundred yards farther on they deployed.

At this point the Confederate losses were heavy, the assailants as they appeared over the brow offering an excellent mark. To advance in close order at a walk

under well-directed shrapnel is trying to veteran nerves; and the cadets could hardly have undergone a more severe ordeal in this, their first moment under fire. Captain Hill, of C Company, and several others fell at this time. Nevertheless, according to the official report, "the alignment of the battalion under a terrible fire that was strewing the ground with dead and wounded for more than a mile of open country, would have been creditable even on a field-day." Both Confederate wings, in fact, were checked; but the centre was more fortunate. It drove the Federals out of Newmarket with the bayonet, capturing a number of prisoners and two guns; and Sigel's whole line, thus broken in two, fell back hastily to a second position on the slopes behind the town, where some of the belated rearguard was beginning to arrive.

A short pause in the action followed. Wharton's brigade was temporarily exhausted and disorganised. The rain had not ceased to fall during the whole morning, and the ground was very heavy; and in the streets of Newmarket there was some confusion as part of Echols's brigade endeavoured to pass through the original captors, who were seeking their various units. Sigel thought he saw an opportunity there for his cavalry, and launched some squadrons down the pike. The Confederate infantry, however, hurriedly clearing the road, disclosed M'Laughlin's battery, which opened with canister on the horsemen and drove them off. Breckinridge was now able to re-form his line beyond the town, to advance once more, and, apparently with little difficulty, to push the Federals up and over the summit of the high ground to a third and last position on Rude's Hill. Here Sigel made a stand. He must have had nearly all his men with him, and was advantageously posted on the hill among farm buildings and coppices, his right still on the Shenandoah, and his left, now west of the pike, protected by wooded gullies that ran toward Smith's Creek.

Hitherto the cadets had played no active part in the engagement, although they had undergone the nerve-racking trial of artillery fire to which they could not reply. But for the last assault Breckinridge threw every bayonet into the first line. The boys were on the left. As they came over the brow of Rude's Hill, past Bushong's Farm, a mile north of Newmarket, they saw before them a long field of young green wheat. On the far side of the field, 300 yards away, Sigel's Germans were lying thick behind fence-rails and in some farm buildings; while at the head of a gully to the boys' right were the four guns remaining from the battery that had been in Newmarket churchyard. At this murderous range the Confederate line was met with an outburst of musketry and canister. For a few minutes the men were falling by dozens, and even the

veterans of the Virginia regiments seemed to waver. Upon the cadets, pushing forward waist-high in the wheat, the blast smote disastrously. One of them, John S. Wise, has described that critical moment. "At one discharge," he writes, "poor Cabell, our first sergeant, by whose side I had marched so long, fell dead, and by his side Crockett and Jones. A blanket would have covered the three. They were awfully mangled with the canister. A few steps beyond, M'Dowell, a mere child, sunk to his knees with a bullet through his heart. Atwill, Jefferson, Wheelwright, fell upon the greensward and expired; Shriver's sword-arm dropped helpless to his side, and C Company thereby lost her cadet as well as her professor-captain. The men were falling right and left. The veterans on the right of the cadets seemed to waver. Ship, our commandant, fell wounded. For the first time the cadets seemed irresolute. Some one cried out, 'Lie down!' and all obeyed, firing from the knee—all but Evans, the ensign, who was standing bolt upright. Poor Stanard's limbs were torn asunder and he lay there bleeding to death. Some one cried out, 'Fall back and rally on Edgar's battalion!' Several boys moved as if to obey; but Pizzini, orderly of B Company, with his Italian blood at the boiling-point, cocked his gun and swore he would shoot the first man who ran. Preston, brave and inspiring, with a smile lay down upon his only arm, remarking that he would at least save that. Collona, captain of D, was speaking words of encouragement and bidding the boys shoot close. The boys were being decimated; manifestly they must charge or retire; and charge it was. For at that moment Henry A. Wise, our first captain, beloved of every boy in the command, sprang to his feet, shouted the charge, and led the cadet corps forward to the guns. The guns of the battery were served superbly; the musketry fairly rolled. The cadets reached the firm greensward of the farmyard in which the battery was planted. The Federal infantry began to break and run behind the buildings. Before the order to 'Limber up!' could be obeyed our boys disabled the trails and were close upon the guns; the gunners dropped their sponges and sought safety in flight. Lieutenant Hanna hammered a burly gunner over the head with his cadet sword. Winder Garret outran another and attacked him with his bayonet. The boys leapt on the guns, and the battery was theirs; while Evans was wildly waving the cadet colours from the top of a caisson."[1]

Mr Wise wrote this account many years after the event, and then from hearsay, for he had been wounded earlier in the day, and in a few details it is inaccurate. One of the

[1] "The West Point of the Confederacy."—'Century Mag.,' Jan. 1889.

Federal guns, for example, was limbered up in time and escaped. But the story is vivid: the feat it perpetuates is unexampled; and the picture of these boys of fifteen and sixteen charging through the wheat upon the battery is one that stirs the blood. Their sacrifice was not in vain: their charge was part of a general advance by the whole of Breckinridge's line, which pushed the Federals back and crowded them in confusion into the narrow angle made by Smith's Creek and the Shenandoah. Here, on the northern edge of the plateau, Sigel's batteries and almost untouched reserves held off their pursuers while the rest of his force got across the bridge over the Shenandoah at Mount Jackson. The Confederates, after their all-night march and twelve hours' battle (for it was now 6.30 in the evening, and still raining), were in no condition to press the pursuit. The fugitives passed the river in safety, the covering infantry and guns were skilfully withdrawn, and the bridge was set alight. Breckinridge had won his victory, but it was no Sedan; and within a month Sigel's successor was to come sweeping down the Valley again.

But to the Lexington boys, and indeed to all cadet corps the world over, that 15th of May was more worthy of celebration than any classic victory. They had won a unique honour; and none praised them more whole-heartedly than the tattered Virginians who had sung "Rock-a-by, baby!" when the cadets first marched into Staunton. The Federal prisoners, who numbered several hundreds, nearly all Germans, were no less appreciative of "der leetle tevils mit der vite flag." "Our strange colours," says Wise, "our diminutive size, and our unusual precision of movement, made them think we were some foreign mercenary regulars."

Sigel lost in this engagement about 700 killed and wounded, an unspecified number of prisoners (he says only fifty, but this is plainly an untruth), and five guns. He had in the field perhaps 8000 men, but five-sevenths of his casualties occurred in three regiments—the 18th Connecticut, 34th Massachusetts, and 54th Pennsylvania, which seems to prove that the majority of his units fought without much enthusiasm. The German element in the Federal army was never popular, and was held responsible for the disaster to the 11th Corps at Chancellorsville; and although these aliens fought well enough on occasion, it may be that men who had left their own country to escape military service felt no great flame of ardour for a cause that had dragged them into battle after all.

The Confederates, who were attacking all day long at Newmarket, lost more heavily in killed and wounded than their opponents. Their casualties totalled about 900. The four infantry companies of the cadets, which went into action

with 225 officers and men, lost 56, or exactly one-fourth. The gun section does not seem to have suffered, but the boys were highly commended for the manner in which they handled their three pieces.

For a week or so after the battle the cadet corps was moved about all over Virginia, although Breckinridge wished it to be relieved from further duty in the field. It was back at Staunton on the 21st, was then sent to Richmond, where it stayed in camp till the 28th, and, after other vicissitudes, only arrived back at the Institute on June 9th, to find that the days of the familiar building were numbered. Hunter, who relieved Sigel of his command and brought reinforcements to his disheartened army, had defeated Breckinridge at New Hope on the 5th, and the Federal cavalry was already approaching Lexington. On the 11th the boys marched out again to drive the enemy's vedettes from the town, a task in which, veterans as they now felt themselves to be, they were easily successful; but Hunter was at hand in force, and on the following day the Institute was abandoned. The same night it was given to the flames.

DOUGLAS G. BROWNE.

FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON.

THE Concentration Camp at Bandernagore might fairly have been set down as one of the more unpleasant places in India in August of this year. It is true that it was the period of the Monsoon, but the Monsoon must be written down a failure as far as Bandernagore was concerned. It had brought a few storms of rain which had temporarily converted a hothouse into a Turkish bath, and it had then retired with mutterings of thunder to sulk in some more favoured region.

It was eleven o'clock in the morning, and I had been sitting in my E.P. tent since six o'clock. I mention this to justify the fact that I was sipping a "chota" whisky and a "barra" but undeniably tepid soda.

Outside the earth was baked and brown and seemed to be strangling the few shrubs that still struggled pluckily with the drought; within about fifty yards of my tent began the lines of forty-pounders, and clustering in the feeble shade which they afforded were gathered the various races who on an historic occasion had attempted without success to build the Tower of Babel.

Inside my tent the air was pitted with flies and perfumed by one of the most complicated smells I have ever experienced, even in the East. It was a smell of mixed humanity and some of the more messy forms of food, and it floated gently but persistently through the door of the tent. Besides the flies and the smell, the tent held three interpreters who endeavoured to conceal the gaps in their knowledge by their zeal and self-importance —a Babu with gold spectacles and a large number of certificates, a native orderly, and myself.

It only remains to add that the particular reason for my presence in this unsavoury spot was a commission from the Government of India to investigate the conditions under which the Turkish prisoners at Bandernagore were being confined. This does not at first sight sound a very difficult or interesting task, but having some knowledge of the ways both of the Turks and of the Government of India, I approached the job with some misgivings. These I soon found to be fully justified, and the proceedings of the morning resembled a blend of a theological conference of the Early Christian Fathers and a cosmopolitan riot in Port Said.

The Government, whose word is law from Aden to Siam, had decreed that there were two classes of Turks—European and Asiatic; the European Turks,

who were presumably civilised, were to be clad in orientalised pyjamas and fed on Christian fare; the humbler Asiatics were to receive night-gowns and an exclusive diet of dall and ghee. Now the civilised Turk, always assuming that such a creature really exists, could make no complaint; but this was far from being the case with his Asiatic brother, who in nine cases out of ten would have angrily repudiated the title. To be clad in a night-gown was certainly an indignity, but a diet of dall and ghee for a man who has been accustomed to tea and Irish stew must have almost seemed like intentional cruelty. They appreciated with gratitude the fact that their officers had misinformed them as to the immediate treatment which they would receive on being captured by the English, but a quick death was almost preferable to the prospect of an unlimited period of captivity under a *régime* of dall and ghee. This they explained to me in a great variety of tongues.

The trouble, of course, was that Nature, at no time a respecter of Government, had altogether confounded the distinction between European and Asiatic Turks. The term Turk covers a multitude of racial vagaries, a truth that was abundantly illustrated by the cosmopolitan procession which had been filing through my tent since six o'clock in the morning. The Arab, a thief and a gentleman (sometimes), the Syrian who had failed to reach Egypt, the Jew of the period of the Captivity, the Kurd, the Armenian, the Turk proper with all his contempt for the mixed company in which he found himself.

Apart from their unanimity on the subject of dall and ghee, I was chiefly struck by the diversity of their religions. The majority, of course, were Mahommedans, the remainder represented almost every branch of the Christian religion. Nestorians, Jacobites, Orthodox Protestants, Grecians, and Armenians mingled with supporters of the better-known Western creeds. It was a mad travesty of some chapter of Gibbon, a microcosm of the Early Christian Church.

In the little villages of Asia Minor these tiny sects, which had burned for the privilege of splitting a hair on the Athanasian Creed, had survived centuries of persecution and oppression. There they live to-day, those of them who have escaped the hand of the destroyer, abating not one jot or one tittle of their ancient quarrel with the Catholic Church—still prepared to go to the stake over some abstruse point in the doctrine of the Incarnation, still actively disputing whether Mary was the Mother of Christ or the Mother of God.

It will be asked, "How did these people get to the Concentration Camp at Bandernagore?" Assuredly no one was more surprised, nor, apart from the vexed question of dall, more relieved than the prisoners themselves at their presence in Bandernagore. Certainly

they were of the class whose greatness is thrust upon them. The least reputable had been supplied with rifles and placed in the firing line; the majority had been compelled to act as *bhisties* and sweepers, and to perform the menial jobs of camp and trench life.

The procession had begun with the Arabs — big Arabs and little Arabs, Arabs of the marsh and Arabs of the desert; Arabs who looked like the Wise Men of the East and Arabs who looked and were the most unutterable of scallywags. All alike expressed the greatest friendliness for us and ours, and a deep regret at the misconception which had landed them in captivity. As the majority of the Arabs were allies of ours who, no doubt in a moment of excitement, had turned their guns on to a regiment of British infantry, I acknowledged both the regret and the misconception.

Next had come the Armenians, and for these one could feel nothing but pity. In the good old days of Abdul Hamid the British conscience was from time to time profoundly stirred by tales of massacre in Armenia, stories of an innocent people systematically decimated by the orders of the Government. There is a great deal more to be said for the old *régime* in Turkey as opposed to the new one than is generally credited. Abdul's massacres were regarded as warnings, or at least as petty chastenings rather than as genuine punishments; a disturbance was followed by the execution of as many Armenians between the ages of thirty and thirty-five, or twenty-five and thirty, as could be found in the course of a single day. Such restraint smacked of soapy philanthropy to the sterner generation of Young Turks, and, I am afraid, also to their German helpers and masters; so when the people of Northern Armenia, which was too close to the Russian armies and too mountainous in character to be interfered with, showed every symptom of an armed rising, the word went forth that the people of Southern Armenia, less happily placed, were to be blotted out. Blotted out, accordingly, they were, men, women, and children, saving the remnant who either succeeded in making their escape to the north, or were utilised for menial jobs in the Turkish army. I listened to their pitiful tale, and resolved that they were worthy of better things than night-gowns and dall.

They had been followed by a community of eighteen Jews, dwellers in the country beyond Nineveh, where they must have lived since the days of the Dispersion. Their spokesman was a venerable gentleman with a long white beard, who might have been the Prophet Jeremiah, and was garbed in what I like to think was a gaberdine. Their principal trouble was naturally that of food, and they called down on me the blessing of the God of their fathers when I agreed that they should

in future have their own butcher.

So the procession passed through on that August morning; the interpreters grappled manfully but incoherently with the difficulties of their task, the Babu wrote voluminous notes with immense rapidity, and the perspiration dripped steadily from my forehead on to the blotting-paper in front of me.

A few of the prisoners appeared in a state of righteous indignation, which recalled the first appearance of Mr Bultitude at school. There was one gentleman who broke into a torrent of fluent French, and explained with vehemence that he was the uncle of an English captain.

"You are not the uncle of an English captain!" I replied with some surprise and a great deal of incredulity. His French, though fluent, was of a "chi-chi" character, and his complexion indicated a deficiency of several annas in the rupee.

"Mais, monsieur, je vous assure, je suis l'oncle d'un capitaine anglaise."

His sister had married Mr X. of the Post Office, "et leur fils est véritablement capitaine dans les Madras Volunteers." I gave him the benefit of the doubt and some encouragement as to his future.

But the gem of the collection was reserved till the end. I was beginning to think that my morning's work was finished, when my orderly reappeared leading a woe-begone figure into my presence. The captive assumed that attitude of humility, tempered by expectation of benefits to come, which seems to be the prerogative of the Oriental.

"What are you?" I asked. No, he was not a Turk or an Arab, but a Christian merchant from Amara on the Tigris.

"How did you come here?" The answer was a gesture, indicating that he considered himself as dirt under my feet, and yet would venture to entreat a favourable countenance for his hard case.

He would tell me his story, and I should be his judge whether he was not the most unfortunate of men.

He was a Christian merchant of Amara. Yes, it was true that he lent money; but at no time did he exact more than a fair measure of interest. "Then the English soldiers came to Amara, and their leader sent for me and asked if I would act as contractor. I said 'No,' but my brother was contractor, and would supply them with wood and wire. Therein"—he spoke with conscious pride—"I spoke the truth. That same evening there was word sent round that all those who had been employed by the late Government were to present themselves at the Serai at six o'clock the next day.

"Further, it was said in the Bazaar that all such would be employed by the English. I had not been a servant of the late Government, but I greatly

desired a small office, for your Honour knows how the possession of such will assist a poor man in the collection of his debts." I nodded, and did not add that I also knew that it assisted a poor man greatly in the illegal acquisition of other people's property: such are the ways of the Turkish Empire.

"So the next day," my Bunnia continued, "I went to the Serai, and there I found assembled all those who had been employed by the late Government, and we passed before a Babu. He said to me, 'You were not employee of the late Government!' I answered 'I am a poor man, write my name in your book.'

"So he wrote me down, and I passed through, and——"

The rest was told by a comprehensive gesture; his head went down and to the right, his shoulder went up and his hands spread out. Never was there a more complete example of cleverness overreaching itself.

Magna est veritas; he must at any rate have the credit of having told me a palpably true tale; in fact, he was far too unconscious of anything else but his ill-treatment to do otherwise. For the most trivial of tarradiddles he had been heavily punished by Fortune; here he was with the other members of the late Government, clad in a night-gown and feeding on dall, while his brother, after a decent period of mourning, was in all probability collecting his outstanding debts, and piously thanking God for His many mercies.

It was good to end up with an honest piece of comedy a morning which had brought home to me so many little tragedies. The disgruntled Bunnia passed on his way, and I went in search of the club and tiffin.

There is a general idea abroad in the far districts of Asia Minor that the day of the Turk is drawing to a close; under a good Government there is no reason why the ancient garden of the world should not resume its proud title; to give an eastern version of a western proverb, no grass has grown where the Turk has trod, but given the peace and security of British rule, the old cities would rise again from their ruins, the water would flow afresh in the canals and conduits, and every man might sit once more under the shade of his olive-tree. As for the people, they would most of them honestly welcome the change of masters, for they have fared ill through the centuries.

Then, perhaps, we shall find something better to give them than night-gowns and dall.

THE BURDEN AND HEAT OF THE DAY.

"Five o'clock, sir," said some one invisible, and the subaltern woke slowly on a camp-bed beneath the stars, with the taste of sleep in his mouth. It was very cold and very dark,

and close by was the faint, high screaming and snorting of many mules. For a moment there passed through the subaltern's head an inconsequent memory of Oxford, Oxford where one was called at half-past eight, and again at half-past nine and ten. . . . He rose with somewhat conscious heroism. When you are near a northern frontier of India and travelling by road in company with about three hundred transport mules and a mountain battery it is best to forget Oxford, especially at five o'clock in the morning. After a shivering and hurried toilet the subaltern plunged ear-deep into a capacious "British Warm," and stumbled away through the cold starlight past long lines of unseen mules to a *tonga* by which a few officers of the battery were gulping a cup of tea and a hard-boiled egg; behind them loomed a group of bearers waiting to pack up the poor remnants of the officers' mess.

The major in command of the battery came up, a perpetually cheerful gentleman with a monocle. "Ready for another joy-ride, eh? How are the mules this morning? Hurry up with that tea, Khitmagar. Egg? All right, we shan't breakfast till we're over the pass. There's another dam mule off." A thud of hoofs was audible, and a confused shouting in Hindustani. But, strange though it appears, mules are always caught. . . .

By now there was an orange flush along the eastern line of the hills, which in this country close every quarter of every landscape, and soon the column was moving: first went a small escort of Indian infantry, then the battery with the major at its head on foot, humming a tune; he never rode a horse on the march, and nothing had yet been known to tire him; last came the three hundred pack mules with their slouching *drabis* and a small, fortuitous escort of British infantry. Nominally the subaltern was in charge of the transport mules, but he was an infantry subaltern by rights still slightly respectful of a mule's hind hoofs. An imperturbable British transport sergeant with a ready flow of objurgation in Urdu rode at his side and was feared by every man in the mule corps, from the youngest recruit to the cross-eyed *kôt-duffadar* lately returned from France with rheumatism and a great respect for the sea, which no other man now in the corps had seen.

The sun came up over the hills ahead, the cloud of dust in which the column moved was glorified like a cloud of fire, and a *drabi* and his mules on a slight rise in front were silhouetted dead black against that curtain of flame. It became light but not yet warm, and the subaltern thanked Providence for his "British Warm," which he had arranged to transfer to a cart when the sun was well up. He reflected with satisfaction that if he had been with his infantry he would have been shivering at dawn in the clothes which he wore through the blaze and heat of the day.

As the cool sun crept up, shining full on the hills behind the column, they turned from twilit grey to muddy brown. For when the sun is low at morning and evening, and every hollow is black in shadow, the hills look like nothing more than indiscriminate sand-castles left long ago by some gigantic child. You can never escape these lonely and inscrutable hills, so obviously indifferent to everything but their own eternal thoughts; far or near they bound every view, the only feature in that terrible expanse of rubble and dust interminably level to the eye, but hollowed into innumerable *nullahs* and *karezes*.

The subaltern had just discarded his "British Warm" when the column began to pass a line of forts, deserted of man, but apparently in good repair, and placarded here and there with notice-boards, one of which, pointing down a track slanting endlessly across the waste towards the mountains and the rising sun, announced hopefully that this might be expected to lead to a certain large garrison town which is one of the shut gates of India. The finger-post in that howling desert is ludicrously spruce and civilised; but of such is the British Empire.

Up the pass winds the column, and by now it is beginning to straggle. The day is still cool, but the pace of a mountain-battery mule is four miles an hour, and the pace of a pack-mule is only three. Also of the transport *drabis* stumbling along, each with his three linked mules, many are recruits, mere children, while the battery drivers, who carry swords and wear red in their *pagris*, are bearded men. Also the loads come off a transport mule now and again, and the *drabi* must draw to the side of the road while the column passes, until some member of the scanty baggage-guard will hoist the fallen load for him. The transport sergeant exhorts his drivers now and again, addressing them invariably as *baba*, which is a cheery "my boy." "It encourages them," he says.

The heat does not begin until the column is over the pass and almost down to the level ground beyond it. Then it comes suddenly, like a stab in the back, for the sun by now is dead behind them. Word comes back that the transport must not try to keep with the battery; coming on at its own pace, it will close up at the hour's halt four miles ahead. Those four miles go very hardly; the subaltern's eyes are shutting, and he nearly comes off his horse when it starts suddenly as an escaped mule goes clattering past with half its load trailing desperately behind it. A *drabi* begins to sing one of the wailing, unintelligible songs of India—a sure sign of weariness, for, unlike Thomas Atkins, these *drabis* do not sing until they are tired.

At last the battery is seen halted ahead, the mules spread

out along the side of the track, the loads are off, and the *drabis* lie down in the scanty shadow of their mules, winding their *pagris* round their faces. The British gunners cluster behind an ambulance *tonga*, the transport sergeant goes off to see if the battery sergeants' mess has a cup of tea for him, and the subaltern joins the gunner officers in front. On the way he finds his own bearer, a sad-eyed plutocrat with a bicycle, being rebuked by the battery captain, who had found him two miles ahead of the column, asleep by the track with his bicycle at his side. This is unwise when you are not a day's march from Afghanistan; for throats have been cut on this road before now.

The officers' breakfast is set on a white cloth; also there is a patch of shade rather larger than a melon from a ragged shrub of wild thyme. The major, to whom this place is offered, refuses it at once on principle, and seats himself carefully in the full glare of the sun, humming a tune. It is difficult to eat with relish in considerable heat, even where there are no flies, but a large slice of water-melon is very welcome, and a cup of tea is better still.

Returning towards the mules with their ceaselessly flicking tails, the subaltern found a water-melon (do you remember the water-melons in 'King Solomon's Mines'?) thoughtfully stowed away for him by his bearer in a cart, and presented it to a group of grateful and perspiring gunners.

Soon the column is off again, and now the troubles begin. Again the battery draws slowly ahead in its own cloud of dust. Wearily the mules jog over the endless level—mere interminable rubble it seems, broken only by the distant mountains, and here and there by the huge white pillar of a dust-storm, stalking slowly far away over the plain, looking, when it first rises, like the burst of a distant shell, and then, as it gathers height and moves, like a *djin* of the Arabian Nights. Three miles, four, five are wearily jogged away; the subaltern's lips are cracked and parched and it is painful to move them. The mules which started too early for their morning water (which they decline fastidiously in the cold), begin to flag; another mile and one falls suddenly in the road; then another; nothing, it seems, will get it up again—not kicks nor curses, nor jerking reins. At last, when load and saddle are off, it is hauled up and its load given to a spare animal. Both ambulance *tongas* are well filled already—with Indians at present, whom mostly the sun has taken in the belly. Still the forefront of the battery can be seen ahead, winding interminably on and on. The most insidious of rumours comes down the line, "We are on the wrong track." If that be so, where will water be found? And without water there cannot be a final halt. The transport sergeant gallops off and plunges into fierce objurgation of an Indian soldier

who has passed by a fallen load. The soldier says angrily that he is not a coolie; the sergeant replies that he is a servant of the Government and drags him back. Another two miles and still no sign of a halt at the head, which must be nearly four miles away by now and is rarely seen through the dust. Presently the subaltern passes a British soldier stretched out by the roadside under the blazing sun, like a log, head on arms, another patient for the *tonga*. Still the dust and the sun, and the distant battery still moving. It is well past the expected hour of arrival, and, looking behind, the sergeant points out that the rear of the column is out of sight altogether; from front to rear it must be a good six miles. The *naiks* and *kôt-duffadars* of the mule corps put weary *drabis* on their mules and horses, and one sturdy *naik* is trudging on foot, leading twelve mules. Some of the youthful recruits are disposed to be tearful, and one footsore youngster sits down and weeps outright as his load falls for the fourth time. A gunner of the escort stoops wearily to it. "This is a nice bluggy retreat from Mons, I don't think," he observes, and expectorates violently. It is water that the Indians want most; they will go all day without food, but water they must have — water however dirty. The brackish water they brought from the last bivouac is gone, and there are no water *packawls* on the mules, for, according to the map, water should have been reached long ago.

It is five o'clock — eleven hours already on the road — when the subaltern comes into sight of a broad hollow, with a river, a real river, running through it. It is indeed a *θαλάσσα, θαλάσσα* for the *drabis*, and they stagger forward greedily over the broad, salt-crusted flat. One collapses dramatically within twenty yards of the river. "Let me alone, sahib," he says faintly to a passing gunner who attempts vaguely to assist.

The subaltern walks back up the rise from the river flats and back along the deep dust of the abhorred track; the stragglers are beyond sight in the distance. "Good thing it's not war," the subaltern reflects; "however, we should have had to halt the head then. Anyway, they'll all get in." And he falls to elaborate imagination of a dinner at a London restaurant, with a taxi and a music-hall to follow. Salmon? Yes, certainly salmon, *au naturel*, though. And champagne. . . . Two Indian sepoys plod wearily up, and espying the subaltern's water-bottle, one falls suddenly on his knees with outstretched hands. "*Pani, Sahib, pani.*" The subaltern pours out a slender stream into the hollowed palms, wondering vaguely what the sepoy's caste would say of this. He tries to explain that there is a big river down in the hollow there; the men nod unintelli-

gently and plod off. A few scattered transport units go by at longish intervals; one is a cart, on the top of which perches a camp-follower, an ancient *mehtah*, painfully examining his feet and muttering discontentedly to himself. Meanwhile four carts have gone back for stragglers, and in due time bring in their harvest. The subaltern trudges back and across the river to the place of bivouac beyond; by now it is nearly cool, and, when a gunner officer has hailed him to a lime-juice and water and he has changed his shirt, the subaltern is profoundly happy.

Slowly the sun sinks towards the eternal and indifferent hills, and with the fall of twilight they grow remote and grey with one clear, early star shining yellow above them. The indomitable major has gone along the river-bed with a gun and returned empty-handed. The whistle blows for the mules' feed, and the lines are a pandemonium of screams and snorts and whinnying brays. The animals are inspected for galls and other ills, and now and again roll themselves contentedly in the dust. Then follows a luxurious rest till dinner-time. Twilight deepens quickly through starlit dusk to darkness. The *drabis*—their last man in by now—croon softly to themselves and cook their flat *chupatties* over glowing embers, thoughtfully the mules snuff at their *bhusa*, and a slender moon rises towards Afghanistan. Maybe the day was hot, and maybe to-morrow will be hotter still; but the evening repays for all.

GODFREY ELTON.

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SUBMARINE.

THE war has now lasted for well over a year, and has been decided on the sea. It is at least eminently improbable that anything can happen to modify the results already obtained. We are therefore in a position to undertake to give an answer to some, if not all, of the questions which were debated before the strife began. The most vital, and by no means the least eagerly discussed of them, was the nature and the extent of the change in naval warfare which must be brought about by the intrusion of the submarine or submersible vessel into the ancient solitary reign of the ship which fought on the surface. The relative powers of the two kinds of craft depended on the relative values of their natural weapons. A submarine can carry guns. A battleship or cruiser is fitted with torpedo tubes. But when they are pitted against one another, the gun of the submarine is feeble indeed as a means of damaging cruiser or battleship, while the torpedo of either of these two is of small or no effect against the assailant who strikes from beneath the surface. The types, the weapon, the method are all practically different. The debate was only the more lively because down to the autumn of last year the disputants were forced to rely on deductions from argumentative premises, or experiments made in conditions which did not allow of a conclusive test. To-day we have an ample experience for our guide, and it is of the fullest, the most satisfactory character. We can look back on the speculations of the last months of peace, and on the teaching of a year and a quarter of war. When the two are compared they combine to authorise us to decide what and how much has been proved.

The most thoroughgoing, the most aggressive, statement of a case is not useless because it is not wholly acceptable. It may, when it is made by a competent authority, supply a standard for comparison. No better measuring scale could be desired than Admiral Sir Percy Scott's letter published in 'The Times.' It was the more effective because he could not be accused of speaking *pro domo sua*. Sir Percy was above all else a gunnery authority, and might naturally be supposed to be inclined to lean on the side of the weapon he had studied, and, as a natural consequence, to incline to prefer the form of ship of which the gun is the proper armament. The world could not but be startled when it heard him say, "The introduction of the vessels that swim under water has, in my opinion, entirely done away

with the utility of the ships that swim on the top of the water." As the present purpose is not to summarise a particular controversy, I shall not inquire whether Sir Percy did not later somewhat qualify these words. A clear statement of claim in its utmost scope is what we seek, and here it is beyond peradventure. The utility of the "ships that swim on the surface" was "to be done away with" by the submarine. You cannot go farther than annihilation. Sir Percy did not leave a bald assertion standing unsupported. He gave reasons and described methods. The ship on the surface, be it as strong as construction and armour can make it, is terribly vulnerable below the water-line, where the torpedo strikes. An assailant below the surface cannot be detected. Therefore the ship on the surface cannot guard herself against the blow from under. The submarine, too, has its difficulties in seeing, but it will work with the aeroplane, which can see and report. The union of the two will—but let us hear Sir Percy Scott:—

> "In war-time the scouting aeroplanes will always be high above on the look-out, and the submarines in constant readiness, as are the engines at a fire station. If an enemy is sighted, the gong sounds and the leash of a flotilla of submarines will be slipped. Whether it be night or day, fine or rough, they must go out to search for their quarry. If they find her she is doomed, and they give no quarter: they cannot board her and take her as a prize as in the olden days; they only wait till she sinks, then return without even knowing the number of human beings that they have sent to the bottom of the sea. Will any battleship expose herself to such a dead certainty of destruction? I say, No."

Sir Percy did not limit the power of the submarine to such circumstances as he indicates here. It was also his opinion that "the ships that swim on the top of the water" could be sought out and sunk in harbour, where they lie behind "the so-called protecting boom." "With a flotilla of submarines commanded by dashing young officers of whom we have plenty, I would undertake," he said, "to get through any boom into any harbour, and sink or materially damage all the ships in that harbour." Nor did he predicate that only warships would be assailed in this way. He assumed that merchant ships would be similarly attacked. When told that such treatment of unarmed trading craft would be ruled out as barbarous, he answered in his reply to critics, "All war is of course barbarous, but in war the purpose of the enemy is to crush his foe; to arrive at this he will attack where his foe is most vulnerable. Our most vulnerable point is our food and oil supply. The submarine has introduced a new method of attacking these supplies. Will feelings of humanity restrain our enemy from using it?" Without exactly saying so much, Sir Percy wrote so as to leave the impression that in his opinion the submarine would prove as fatal to the trader that swims on the top

of the water as to the warship.

In the main the substance of the admiral's letters was not new to those who had had an opportunity of hearing what naval officers were saying among themselves. Very similar or even identical views had been expressed for some years past, and before the submarine had been developed to its present level of capacity. The doctrine was first effectively stated in public by him, and the position and authority of the writer compelled a hearing which might not have been given to a less distinguished teacher. Sir Percy Scott's arrow flew with the wind, and its ranging power was notably helped by his style of forcible precept. His aim was to give an account of the utmost the submarine could be expected to do. As a matter of course, his statement of the case was not accepted without question, but it is not necessary to detail the whole controversy. The substance of all the replies provoked by his letters had, I venture to think, been already given in the June number of 'Blackwood' (1914), and in these words:—

"Some of us find it hard to believe that any 'man-of-war' which dare not openly confront an enemy and conquer in an exchange of blows, can ever dominate the sea. Victory has never so far gone to those who fight by evasion, by concealment, by striking in the dark, by waiting for the unguarded moment,—points they may score, but they have never won in the end."

The question was whether the submarine with its torpedoes was to displace the ship which commanded on the surface by virtue of its power to give and to resist blows, and by the use of the gun, or whether it was to remain a subordinate weapon. Fifteen months of naval warfare have given us a great body of evidence for our instruction. There has been actual trial by battle, and we now know what we are to expect, at least approximately.

No one can be surprised by the discovery that neither side has been proved to have been wholly in the right. The submarine has done more, and has done less, than it was expected to achieve. In one respect it has shown that it possessed greater resources than were claimed for it by Sir Percy Scott. He figured it as a craft which would depend on the co-operation of the aeroplane, and start for each attack from the shore. Whatever co-operation it has had (and on that point there has been far more speculation or fanciful supposition than evidence), it has proved that it can dispense with the aid of aircraft, and can cruise at no trifling distances from its ports. The German U boat has prowled at the mouth of the Channel, on the south coast of Ireland, and in the Mediterranean, with no small measure of success. As far as we know it has cruised alone, depending on its own power to detect and to attack. The common belief that it would be unable to act by night has been demonstrated to be quite unfounded by the

sinking of the *Formidable*. On one point Sir Percy Scott judged better than many of his critics. The Germans have made use of "the new method of attacking" trade, with very little regard to humanity at any time, and on many occasions with none. The submarine, when handled by the Germans, has scored signal successes in the North Sea, the Channel, on the south coast of Ireland, in the Dardanelles and Ægean. In the hands of British crews it has won in the same manner where it had a target, while the Austrians have to their credit one full victory — the sinking of the *Léon Gambetta*. We all see now that a new and a most destructive weapon has come into naval warfare, to stay, and very probably to grow in power. It has altered the scale of values among warships, and that to the detriment of those vessels which are still the bulk of every navy — the battleships and cruisers. On that point we must all be agreed. What remain to be solved are the questions, Whether the submarine has done enough to prove that it can destroy the ship in the old sense altogether? And then if it fails to go so far, What must be the counteraction on the fleet which makes use of them, of the measures taken to guard against its attack?

When it is said that we have experience enough to go by, I do not mean to assert that the facts are known as they will be when the history of the war comes to be written. In most cases there is nothing to go by save the bare statement of the fact that H.M.S. *Pathfinder* or another was sunk by a torpedo launched by a submarine. And even if we had the report of the British officers, we could not know the story as we do, say, the action of the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake*. The reports of both sides are required to complete the evidence. But however fragmentary the available testimony may be, the mere event is often enough to convey the essential truth. The bald fact, for instance, that the *Hawke* was struck and sunk in daylight by an unseen foe is convincing. A few years ago it was a commonplace that the day when small vessels could hope to escape by speed or handiness from the pursuit of the larger was over. The larger the ship, the better and the more swiftly can she go in all weathers. Yet we see that a craft which was small, and probably even slow, in comparison with the cruiser, could kill by a stroke. The loss of the three *Cressys* — thanks to an erratic burst of confidence on the part of the Admiralty, and to the publication in this country of the German officers' statement to an American newspaper — is a fairly well-known episode. The pith and substance of it is both painful and convincing. Here were three British cruisers—not new vessels, indeed, but still valuable — which were sent down one after another by a single

German submarine. First one was mortally wounded, and then a second and a third as they came to help their consort.

The mere statement of the fact is enough to put the essential truth beyond dispute. It is that the big ship when left to its own resources is terribly vulnerable by the submarine. The age of the vessels is an irrelevant consideration. If the *Cressy* and her consorts had been the three newest cruisers in the British Navy, they would in the circumstances have undergone the same fate. And what were the circumstances? Simply that the three cruisers were not going at a high speed, and that they were without the protection of an attendant flotilla of destroyers. We may put aside all question as to who was to blame, if anybody was, for the absence of these guards. The point is that they were needed, or were held to be. I will go further. Suppose, as was said commonly at the time (how truly I neither know nor care), that the German officer, Captain Weddigen, had information from spy, decoy, or what not, that the three would be at the place where he attacked them, and at the time. Even so his knowledge could only tell him that he had an opportunity. It could not give him the power to strike his blows. That he drew from the nature of the craft he commanded and the deadly weakness of the big ship (for the three cruisers were big as compared to his boat) when assailed by the torpedo launched by a submarine. The disaster had a consequence which passed with little comment, and yet was of the highest significance. The Admiralty gave orders that in future whenever a British ship had fallen to a submarine attack, no other vessel of such size and draught as to be subject to the same danger was to go to her assistance. Let us allow that My Lords did well to give that order, since the rule they set up diminished the danger of loss. It was a novelty, and a sad one. The articles of war still denounce the heaviest penalty on the captain who does not go to the aid of a "known friend in sight." If this reversal of the old rule, this alteration in the standard of honour, was justified, the reason is that something has come into naval warfare which in many circumstances is so much more powerful than the big ship that it must be not assailed but avoided by her.

All this talk, too, of the need for protecting destroyers and so forth has been severely discounted by later events. Mr Ashmead Bartlett has been allowed to tell the story of the loss of the *Majestic* in the Dardanelles. The moral of his report is obvious to all. It was known that German submarines were in the neighbourhood. They had been actually seen at a depth which protected them from the ram. The *Majestic* was guarded by destroyers in a swarm. She was inside a line of transports when she was sent to the

bottom by a submarine. We are informed that she was an old ship, only fit to be scrapped, as the phrase goes. But why was this old ship left to incur the danger? Simply because the new were sent away so soon as there was a serious risk that they might be attacked by submarines. There is nothing here which has not been confessed. How much there is of the same character of which we have not been informed, we shall know when the war is over. The Admiralty order and these known withdrawals are evidence enough that the weakness of the big ship is conceded in word and by act.

And yet the submarine has not dominated the sea. It has not, and let us hope it never will, but we shall do well to look carefully at the reasons for the failure, and to estimate its extent with judgment.

There is one aspect of their limited success which we must consider with special care. The Germans undertook to prove that Sir Percy Scott was a true prophet when he said that submarines would be used to destroy sea-borne commerce. In the course of their career of destruction they learnt that there is a restraining influence of opinion in the world. They were made to understand how a local success of barbarism can entail its own punishment. The deep offence they gave to the United States taught them that they lost far more than they gained by such a piece of brutality as the sinking of the *Lusitania*. Moreover, they have had to recognise that we can do what they can. Since British submarines have become active in the Baltic their merchant shipping also has suffered. But this, too, is an instance of the power of the submarine. It is one which will make a precedent. What both sides have done in a great war can hardly fail to become an established rule. The enforcement of blockade by the submarine which cannot make prize—except when it is very near its own port—and therefore must needs destroy, has pretty certainly come to stay like the vessel itself. The Germans have failed to enforce blockade by the new method, but they have led to the establishment of the method.

In judging the real significance of the failure of the so-called German "blockade," we have to consider first the question of numbers and then the means used to defeat the attack. It would be idle and unmanly to deny that the British Fleet has asserted its supremacy not by quality alone but also by quantity. It has possessed the advantage of greater numbers to such a degree that there was no possibility of a fair trial of strength with fleets in the North Sea, and this inferiority in numbers has weighed on the use of the submarine by the Germans. Though some of their officers and crews have shown themselves eminently capable of handling these vessels with success, they were not leaders in the use of them, but tardy and, on the whole,

unwilling followers of the French and ourselves. There is some doubt as to the number they possessed when the war began, but the figure was probably somewhere between thirty and forty. It was not enough; and though they have built rapidly since August of last year, their additions had to overtake losses, men and officers had to be practised, and in the meantime our means of defence were growing. The character and the significance of those defences call for careful attention.

There is much in them which is not and ought not to be generally known—or if known, not repeated. But there is one fact which is a matter of common knowledge, and is not attempted to be concealed. These defences have consisted largely of passive barriers—nets, or other guards behind which the big ships can remain in safety. They have not been the only kind of defence used. Our counter-measures have been active as well as passive. Small vessels have been employed to pursue and destroy. Between the active and passive defences the range and the power for mischief of the German submarines has been closely limited. We have lately heard less and less of successful attacks made by them on merchant ships. Their blockade has been a confessed failure. And this is the more satisfactory because the capacity of the vessels themselves had manifestly been much increased. Before the war it was generally assumed, and even explicitly stated, that they were too delicate to stand a severe blow. Yet it has been proved that they can stand a good deal of battering and survive to be brought into port and refitted. Their surface speed has been raised till they can overtake all steamships except the most rapid. Their armament of guns has been made equal to the beating to pieces of a big steamer such as the *Armenian*. In other words, they can act as commerce destroyers on the surface, and are not confined to the use of the torpedo from below and when unseen. They have repeatedly won when they acted precisely as did the privateer of old which relied on its guns. Take, for instance, one case among several—the loss of the s.s. *Hartdale* on the coast of County Down in March. She was chased for a couple of hours or so, while her skipper, Captain Martin, zigzagged and manœuvred to prevent the German from obtaining a position from which to torpedo him. The German was at last able to launch a torpedo and the *Hartdale* was sunk. But she might have perished by gun-fire alone, as did the s.s. *Vosges* in the same month. She, too, was pursued, fired at, and was sent down by a shot which hit her on the water-line.

One has to hesitate somewhat before speaking about the anti-submarine operations. Not only are "the when," "the where," and "the how" of our successes concealed for obvious reasons, but the censorship, working in its mysterious way,

will not tell us the "how many." We must be content to know that our successes have been "formidable," and to listen with such confidence as we can muster to estimates which put the German losses at forty or fifty, or a number equal to the whole additions made to the German submarine fleet since the war began, and so forth. Yet the main fact is not to be disturbed. The submarine blockade has broken down, and though we may perhaps allow some influence to the German discovery that they were getting themselves into hot water with the United States, in the main it has failed because our counter-measures, active and passive, have been too much for it. What would have happened if the Germans had shown more foresight, if instead of entering on a rivalry of great ship building, in which they were certain to be distanced, they had provided themselves with a hundred and fifty or a couple of hundred submarines, is a question of a might have been. They would, we must assume, have scored many more successes, and our losses would have been greater before they were checked. As it is, while they have undeniably done more in some ways than their admirers generally expected, it has been shown that they cannot pass all barriers, and that they can be caught near or on the surface and destroyed by active light craft. Not once have they intercepted the transport of our army to France. They have not disturbed the main flow of our trade. There are defences against them, and their activity can be curtailed.

So far so good. The submarine is not the towering, the destructive, the irresistible craft we were told it would be. But does it follow that the change it has made in naval warfare is less than very great? I think not, and because there seems to be no possibility of denying that they have very notably lowered the relative value of those vessels which were until to-day universally allowed to constitute the strength of a fleet. How great the difference made has been can be explained by a very simple comparison. If at any time down to a very recent date it had been known to an enemy that three British seventy-fours or frigates, or their equivalents, would be found cruising in certain waters at a certain time alone, what effect would the knowledge have had on his movements? He would most certainly have taken every care to keep all his small craft, or any number of his seventy-fours or frigates, or their representatives, less than that small squadron, well out of its way. To-day, if it were known that three armoured cruisers or battleships could be found at a given place, alone without protecting destroyers, then nothing but a total lack of submarines would prevent an enemy of spirit from attacking them. Their danger would be so obvious that they would be expected to retire, or rather

they would not allow themselves to be tied to a discoverable station at all. They would keep at a distance, and on the move perpetually. And that means that there has been a radical change in the value of the larger kind of ships.

Until the submarine was developed the status of a ship, her relative value, depended on her size, her strength, her armament, her speed. Whatever was of less force than herself could but flee before her, and if she had the advantage in speed escape was, unless a refuge were near at hand, impossible. She might make use of small vessels for various subsidiary purposes, but she had no need of them for her protection. On the contrary, she protected them. The growth of the submarine has altered all that. To-day the big ship stands in need of a guard of little attendants. The difference is radical. It is one not of degree but of kind. The ship which dominated by her independent force is not the same kind of thing as the other type of ship which needs continual guarding by something exterior to herself. One feels that a revolution has occurred in naval warfare when we are told by Mr Ashmead Bartlett, and told truly, that no sooner were German submarines known to be prowling about the Dardanelles than the mighty *Queen Elizabeth* vanished away to an unknown destination. All the best ships followed her, and only those which were but fit to be scrapped were left to undergo the fate of the *Triumph* and the *Majestic*. This is surely a confession of defeat and of failure. The fact that fresh vessels have been designed which can replace the brand-new Dreadnoughts as heavy-gun carriers in waters where the submarine is to be feared does not improve their case. It proves that the British navy can meet the new enemy with an effectual answer, and black would be the prospect if that were not the case. Whatever changes may come on the top of the water or below it, the qualities and conditions which have given Great Britain the leadership hitherto will continue to operate. New things will be found to do the old work. But one is forced to believe that these new things will have to differ very greatly from those triumphs of mechanical ingenuity, the Dreadnought battleship and battle-cruiser. They are enormously strong, but there is something on the sea which they fear and must avoid, against which they must be protected. They seem not unlikely to be proved to be superfluous. We can use the said something as well as anybody else, and if it can force hostile Dreadnoughts to keep their distance and seek the defence of safe harbours, of what value are these monsters to us? Where are we to rank the giant ship which on the approach of a submarine has to leave the old craft she was supposed to have surpassed to take her place, and seek a safe harbour? When all the poor old craft are used up what is one to do?

DAVID HANNAY.

SIR RALPH ABERCROMBY.

BY A CONTEMPORARY.

THIS appreciation of Sir Ralph Abercromby was written by Sir John Macdonald, who served with him in Egypt, and who afterwards was Adjutant-General of the Army for twenty-two years. The paper was found in his repositories on his death, and was preserved until now by the writer's nephew, the Right Hon. Sir J. H. A. Macdonald, K.C.B.

MY observation of Sir Ralph Abercromby's character began in the year 1797, in Ireland, where I was serving as subaltern in the 89th Regiment, when he issued the no less just than memorable General Order, in which he denounced the Irish Militia as troops whose licentiousness had rendered them a terror to all but their enemies, and which led to the resignation of his command.

Although then but a very young soldier, I had sufficient discernment to enable me to recognise in that Order the characteristics of a great commander and consummate disciplinarian, as well as that lofty spirit which disdained all compromise, all subserviency to power, when opposed to the obligations of public duty.

I was accordingly prepared, in common with my brother officers of the small regular force which only was at that time employed in Ireland, to hear that Sir Ralph Abercromby had peremptorily refused to recall, or even modify, his General Order; to make any sacrifice whatsoever of his personal feelings, or to relax, in any degree, that code of military discipline which was peculiarly his own, and which constituted the chief source of his uniform success in the field. Concession was required to conciliate those to whom the General Order gave offence, but Sir Ralph Abercromby was not the man to concede in such a case. They consisted of the colonels of the Irish Militia, who might be said to form the main body of the landed interest of Ireland. Most of them were members of the Legislature of that country, and were, when united, sufficiently powerful to awe and to coerce a Government in those days too weak to offer successful resistance to so formidable a confederacy. In justice, however, to Lord Camden, the then Lord Lieutenant, it should be recorded that he deeply regretted the loss of Sir Ralph Abercromby's assistance, and that he felt the vital importance of continuing under the rule of a master-hand the sort of army by which Ireland was destined to be defended against approaching insurrection. Lord Camden's relative, the Hon. Major Boyle, made me acquainted with the state of his Lordship's mind with regard to Sir Ralph Abercromby's resignation, and the

consequences likely to result from it.

The military excesses attendant and consequent upon the Rebellion of the following year gave the most lamentable proofs of the judgment and foresight by which the Order was dictated.

I first saw Sir Ralph Abercromby at Fermoy, where he passed a day in the course of his military tour in the South of Ireland. On that occasion I was introduced to him by my commanding officer, and was invited to dine with him. I was struck with the important tendency of his questions and observations whilst in his company, and had an opportunity of hearing him discuss every branch of the military service with my Commanding Officer (Colonel Stewart), with his Military Secretary (Colonel Maitland), and with a very extraordinary person, the late Hon. Admiral Pakenham, who in those days was Lieut.-General of the Irish Ordnance. The Admiral undertook to exhibit to Sir Ralph Abercromby the advantages of some changes in the equipment of the Field Artillery, which he himself appeared to think infallible. These were described at dinner, and practically exemplified on the following morning. The Admiral's account of his projected improvements amused Sir Ralph Abercromby very much, and although nothing could be much more ludicrous than the exhibition of them, Sir Ralph examined them with the greatest gravity, and listened to the recital of all their alleged merits with the utmost kindness and courtesy. One proposal was, that the horses should never be taken from the gun; that instead of being dragged backward the gun should be dragged forward; that each leading horse should have his mounted driver; that upon being ordered to prepare for action one driver should turn his horse to the right and the other his horse to the left (*without dismounting*), and that the firing should be carried on between the horses. The other proposal was that each driver should have a leather sack slung in his front and upon his saddle, in which a supply of spare cartridges should be carried. The Admiral actually mounted one of the leaders himself, and in this manner played his part before Sir Ralph Abercromby, who, as often as his naval friend turned his back, fell into convulsions of laughter, as did all the other spectators. The exhibition ended, Sir R. Abercromby highly complimented the Admiral's ingenuity and zeal, but, in the kindliest terms, hinted that during the noise and bustle of an action some of the horses might become restive and place themselves *before* the gun, instead of remaining at the side, in which case the poor driver, horse and all, might, not unfrequently, be blown into the air, and the gun lost from the want of means of retiring it, if pressed by the enemy.

With regard to the magazine

of spare ammunition, of which the unfortunate driver was to have charge, Sir Ralph hinted that his Irish friends were rather fond of smoking, and that in case a little whisky should accompany the smoking (a thing not impossible), the driver might not be very particular about throwing down the embers of his tobacco clear of his leather sack, which, though intended to be covered with a flap, might nevertheless be frequently left open, whereby the most serious mischief might ensue.

Admiral Pakenham listened to Sir Ralph with the utmost attention, admitted his objections to be unanswerable, declared that they had never occurred to himself, or been suggested to him until then, and that he should not take another thought about his scheme.

My next interview with Sir Ralph Abercromby was at his own table at Malta, the day after he placed me, at the recommendation of the Honourable Brigadier-General Hope (the late Lord Hopetoun), as an assistant in the Adjutant-General's Department of the Army about to proceed to Egypt. Sir Ralph seemed to remember my having dined with him at Fermoy and been present at his military inspections there, and I, of course, felt proud of his recollection of me.

At Malta Sir Ralph Abercromby applied himself to the most minute inspection of the glorious little Army that was about to be led by him to a succession of the most glorious victories, and at the head of which he was destined to close his mortal career. Every regiment was disembarked separately and re-embarked immediately after inspection. At these inspections he was invariably accompanied by Major-General Moore, Commander of the Reserve, and by Brigadier-General Hope (Adjutant-General), officers who enjoyed his utmost confidence.

Justice, liberal but at the same time inflexible justice, was done to all; no inflated compliments were paid to commanding officers, even when they and their regiments appeared to the greatest advantage, but quite enough was said to satisfy them that they were approaching the field of battle with the confidence of their General, and his confidence comprised all that could be gratifying to their feelings as soldiers.

When any appearance of relaxation of discipline, of want of field instruction, of defective equipment, or want of interior system and management attracted Sir R. Abercromby's notice in the course of his close examination of the ranks of the regiment under his inspection, these (as they seemed to him inexcusable) faults were animadverted upon in terms not to be misunderstood, and the officer who was responsible for their existence was visited with a suitable expression of displeasure, either on the spot or in General Orders.

A case of the latter description occurred at Malta in the course of these inspections,

and created a great sensation at the moment, in consequence of the strong terms in which Sir Ralph Abercromby characterised in General Orders the state of the regiment alluded to (the 23rd or Royal Welsh Fusiliers), a regiment, however, which was understood to be amongst his favourites, and which I shall hereafter show restored itself to his favour under the most glorious circumstances.

This regiment had been on the Expedition of 1799 to Holland, had returned to England in a disjointed and very destitute state; had been suddenly re-embarked for foreign service under a subordinate field officer before its (many) wants could be supplied; had been essentially made up of volunteers from the English Militia, and had been greatly neglected while on board ship owing to the unlucky illness and consequent inefficiency of its temporary commanding officer. In that disreputable state this magnificent national regiment (considered one of the *élite*, and therefore placed in the Reserve) was exhibited to Sir Ralph Abercromby in its turn at Malta, and the consequence was the issue of a severe General Order by which Brigadier-General Oakes was desired to take the command of the regiment into his own hands (to the exclusion of its commanding officer) until he should feel justified in reporting its efficiency in every respect.

The army sailed from Malta, and proceeded to Marmorie Bay, where it remained two months on board ship, and whence it proceeded to Egypt. During our stay at Marmorie Bay I was daily on board the *Kent*, 74-gun ship, commanded by the late Sir William Hope, in which Sir Ralph Abercromby was embarked and had his headquarters. I had there an opportunity of observing some interesting traits of Sir Ralph's character, of the simplicity of his manners, of his detestation of folly and eccentricity in the management of military concerns, of his ardent and incessant anxiety for the welfare and comfort of the troops committed to his care. Although a rigid disciplinarian, and paying himself, as well as exacting, the most implicit obedience to every established usage of his profession, and to the orders and regulations of his Sovereign, Sir Ralph Abercromby was indifferent as to his own personal dress, except as to the point of cleanliness, for which he was always remarkable, that being the very point to which he gave his first attention when looking closely at the soldiers in the ranks to ascertain whether they had health in their countenance, and whether their health was apparently promoted by cleanliness or injured by the want of it.

This disregard of ostentation and show as to dress naturally begat in Sir Ralph an utter contempt for everything in the remotest degree allied to frippery. Mustachios, laced trousers, and extra-sized sabretashes were, in his mind, but so many indications of the want of military *substance* in the wearer; and those who

presented themselves to him in any fancy dress or ornaments soon discovered that although they attracted his notice they failed to raise themselves in his estimation.

A staff-officer, of high rank and station and a personal friend, was sent by Sir Ralph Abercromby upon a special mission to Constantinople, and I happened to be on the quarter-deck of the *Kent* when that officer returned. On his arrival being announced Sir Ralph Abercromby came upon deck to receive him, and instantly observed that his military ambassador had acquired a pair of half-grown mustachios. Sir Ralph was evidently disconcerted, but as evidently resolved to discountenance this little absurdity at once; for after looking earnestly in his friend's face, he exclaimed, before all present, "Why, my good friend" (addressing him by name), "I had no notion that you meant to be a character!" This was more than enough; the rebuke was taken as meant, and the mustachios disappeared in a twinkling.

I was also present when another officer waited upon Sir Ralph on board the *Kent*, to report himself, in a dress of extraordinary magnificence. Sir Ralph approached him with apparent surprise, for his dress partook of various brilliant colours, with the greatest profusion of lace and embroidery.

After surveying this splendid costume very closely and minutely, Sir Ralph Abercromby complimented the wearer upon his appearance, leaving him to estimate the compliment according to his interpretation of the General's looks and the tone of his voice.

Sir Ralph Abercromby had yet to receive another officer (and highly valued friend) in a gaudy dress the peculiar arrangement of which seemed to excite his utmost surprise and curiosity. The expedition left England with a very inadequate Medical Establishment, and Sir Ralph Abercromby requested that an old friend who had served so long and so ably under his command in the West Indies (the late Dr Young) might be sent after him to take charge of that Establishment. This was accordingly done, and the arrival of the new Inspector of Hospitals was announced one morning on board the *Kent*. It appeared by the cordiality of his reception that Sir Ralph Abercromby had been anxiously longing for his friend's appearance, but when the General came on the quarter-deck and found his old and respected friend standing before him dressed in a scarlet coat, studded with lace, and faced with *dragon blood* coloured velvet, Sir Ralph was indeed astonished, and could not help exclaiming, "God bless me, my dear Young, what sort of coat is this?" The answer was: "Sir Ralph, we doctors have hitherto had no suitable dress, and I proposed this dress for the Medical Department to the Duke of York, who was pleased to approve of it." Sir R. Abercromby laughed heartily, and rejoined, "Well,

Young, I am delighted to see you in any coat."

Sir Ralph Abercromby's anxiety about every matter connected with the health and comfort of the soldier was exemplified by a most delightful trait, the working of which I was an eyewitness to in Marmorie Bay. The Grenadier Company of the 42nd Regiment was embarked in the *Kent*, as an arrangement which all parties concerned thought would be agreeable to Sir Ralph Abercromby, under whom that gallant National Corps had repeatedly distinguished itself in the field. The *Kent* was kept in the highest order; the utmost cleanliness pervaded every part of the ship; her decks were constantly swept, scrubbed, and scraped, and were therefore very seldom quite free from damp. This state of things produced rheumatic fever amongst the Highlanders, who occasionally squatted themselves with their bare limbs on the deck, and thus imbibed its damp exhalations. It became necessary to move this "chosen band" to another ship, and the day fixed upon for that operation happened, unfortunately, to take a very unfavourable turn, a severe hail-storm having come on whilst the naval authorities were in the act of lowering the sick of the Highlanders into the boats. Sir Ralph Abercromby in person superintended this interesting service, and could not be prevailed upon to withdraw from the gangway during the storm. That was not all, for this truly good man and great officer gave, himself, the most particular directions for covering each patient with blankets; and perceiving that a gust of wind had thrown open the blanket in which the head and throat of one of the Grenadiers were wrapped, actually rushed forward and, with his own hand, *tucked* the blanket snugly about the soldier's head and neck, calling for a pin or a skewer by which the tucking might be made more secure. "Was it then," it may be asked, "to be wondered that an army led by a General who evinced such affecting solicitude for the soldiers' comfort should be victorious, nay, invincible?"

About this time the officers of the Royal Navy began to think that they themselves did not quite monopolise the martial spirit and the martial qualities of their country. It is an undoubted fact that even before Sir Ralph Abercromby achieved the conquest of Egypt by the three great actions (including the landing) which he fought on the Peninsula of Alexandria, his bearing and manner, as well as the (all but) matchless skill and efficiency manifested throughout all his preparatory arrangements at Malta and Marmorie, had the happiest effects upon our naval brethren, who never, from the day of the landing in Egypt to the present hour, have attempted to claim professional superiority, and have been quite contented to share professional merit *equally* with the Army.

The General Order issued to

the Army by Sir Ralph Abercromby when about to sail from Marmorie was replete with every instruction, injunction, and precaution that could be necessary for the information and guidance of every officer and soldier under every variety of circumstance that could by possibility arise in the course of the arduous service in which we were about to engage. The strictest discipline, the utmost forbearance to and humane treatment of the inhabitants of the country which we were about to invade, the most scrupulously honourable conduct in all our dealings with them, the prompt payment for all supplies purchased of them, the most rigid abstinence from interference with their habits or with their religious tenets or prejudices, were enjoined in the most forcible terms; and the order was faithfully obeyed, for in a few days after we were thrown ashore on the sands of Aboukir, and in a district of country in which a blade of wholesome vegetation was not to be seen, we established a market and began to derive supplies from the inhabitants without being able to guess how they contrived to escape the French, who possessed the whole country except the spot on which our camp stood, occupied every access to us, and made death the penalty of being detected in conveying provisions to us. No excesses were committed upon the person or property of any Arab who showed a disposition to befriend us. Sir Ralph Abercromby, the born enemy of military licentiousness and military outrage, would have instantly resorted to extreme punishment for the suppression of offences of that nature. We accordingly soon became known, by our principles and customs, to the Arabs, and at their hands therefore received the most friendly attention, whilst no Frenchman could stray a hundred yards beyond his sentries without the (almost) certainty of being murdered.

Never was there so beautiful an exemplification of British military discipline as this Army exhibited to the world. Will future ages believe that Sir R. Abercromby was spared the pain of taking cognisance of so much as a single case of outrage or even ordinary misconduct upon the part of either officer or soldier, from the day of our landing at Aboukir to that of his lamented fall at the head of the Army? This fact cannot be contemplated by military men but with mixed feelings of astonishment and unbounded admiration.

The circumstances which impeded the descent at Aboukir need not be adverted to here. The day of landing arrived at last, and the troops forming the Reserve proceeded to the descent, burning with ardour and impatience. Sir Ralph Abercromby, with the principal officers of the Staff, assembled on board one of the bomb vessels that were moored inshore to cover the landing. From the deck of that vessel Sir Ralph had a full view of the enemy's preparations to receive us; and, after an attentive survey of

them, observed (smiling, and turning towards the Adjutant-General), "This is really taking the bull by the horns." Here it became a matter of serious consideration with the principal officers of his Staff (Brigadier-General Hope, Adjutant-General; Colonel Anstruther, Quartermaster-General; Lieutenant-Colonel Kempt, Military Secretary) how Sir Ralph could be prevented from mixing with the troops in the act of grappling with the enemy upon the beach. To obviate the risk of losing him at our very outset, it was arranged that the Lieutenant (Richardson of the *Kent*) who had charge of the boat in which Sir Ralph was to land should not push off from the bomb until he saw the landing effected. Those about Sir Ralph at that moment attempted to divert his attention from the scene passing before him, but in vain. General Hope and Colonel Anstruther got into their boat unobserved by Sir Ralph, and joined the troops when within half a mile of the shore. I, of course, accompanied my chief. We had scarcely left the bomb when Sir Ralph called for his boat, and, accompanied by his son and by his Military Secretary, hurried to the shore, which he reached in full time to direct and to enjoy the conduct of the troops. The enemy gave way at every point, and left us masters of the heights of Aboukir.

By this time Lieutenant-Colonel Hall had arrived from England, and resumed the command of the 23rd Regiment. He was amongst the first who attracted Sir Ralph Abercromby's notice after the troops had ascended the heights. Sir Ralph, upon seeing Hall, walked up to him, and, shaking him heartily by the hand, said, "My friend Hall, I am glad to see you; I shall never abuse you again." The distinguished conduct of the Welsh Fusiliers at the landing having been observed by Sir Ralph Abercromby, he resolved to seize that occasion to do away with the heavy censure passed upon the regiment at Malta. It were unnecessary to add that the terms in which he addressed Colonel Hall more than compensated that censure.

Sir Ralph Abercromby passed the night of the 8th of March (which was very cold, notwithstanding the heat of the day) under a small bivouac formed of the branches of the date tree, which had been constructed for him by the soldiery, who seemed to vie with each other in providing shelter for their general.

Towards the evening of the 12th, Sir R. Abercromby found himself close to the enemy. It was then too late to attack; but he issued his orders for attacking early on the following morning. He ordered that the advanced posts of the Army should be taken that night (the 12th) by the 90th and 92nd Regiments (the two youngest in the Army) under the command of Major-General Moore. This arrangement produced jealousy, but the jealous parties did not dare to give utterance to their feelings. Moore was not first General officer in turn for advance-post duty,

and was junior to three of the other General officers — viz., Major-Generals Coote, Craddock, and Ludlow. He was Scotch, and so were the two regiments with which he was placed in charge of our outposts—hence the imputation of national partiality aimed at Sir R. Abercromby that evening, in my hearing. We lay down in perfect security, knowing the quality of the troops and of the General officer who commanded in our front, and the night passed off in perfect tranquility.

On the 13th the enemy were again defeated, but not without occasioning a great loss of officers and men on our side.

After the action of the 13th we took up the position which we occupied until the end of the campaign, and in which we were attacked on the 21st of March.

Nothing seemed to displease Sir R. Abercromby more than any mistake upon the part of individuals belonging to a victorious army which should be the cause of boast or triumph to the enemy. Until late in the afternoon of the 13th Sir Ralph meditated an attack upon the fortified lines of Alexandria, and, in furtherance of that purpose, a piece of commanding ground (which we called the "green hill") in front of the left of our position was occupied during that day by part of the 44th Regiment, in support of some pieces of battering ordnance which were planted on the green hill and brought to bear upon the right of the enemy's works. When Sir Ralph abandoned his intention of storming the lines of Alexandria, these guns and their supporters were ordered to withdraw from the hill. In withdrawing, this portion of the 44th Regiment was unavoidably exposed to the fire of the enemy's most advanced batteries and lost some men. The wounded were left behind, although the troops alluded to retired slowly and in perfect order; and upon the fate of the wounded being reported to Sir Ralph Abercromby, he expressed the strongest indignation, turning round to his son (the Deputy Adjutant-General) and addressing him, in my hearing, in these words, under feelings of visible anger and vexation: "Colonel Abercromby, I desire, sir, that you will instantly go to the officer commanding the 44th Regiment and assure him, from me, that in the whole course of my service I have not seen, or heard, anything more disgraceful than that of leaving his wounded in the power of the enemy."

Another mistake, equally vexatious, and of nearly the same nature, occurred a few days afterwards, and brought Sir Ralph Abercromby's severest censure upon its authors.

The officer commanding our small body of cavalry having been apprised of the approach of a detachment of the enemy, immediately mounted his men and sallied forth to intercept it. This detachment was escorting military stores from Cairo to Alexandria, and was marching to its destination over the bed of Lake Mareotis. The commander of the convoy, perceiv-

ing that his assailants were cavalry only, betook himself with his detachment to the bank of the canal of Alexandria (then quite dry), and posted himself behind it in perfect security. No sooner did the cavalry come within his reach than he opened the most destructive fire, killing and wounding several of them, and pursuing his march without a single casualty. Hearing this unexpected firing upon our left (about four o'clock in the afternoon), Sir Ralph Abercromby sent to know the cause, and upon being informed he became if possible more indignant than even in the case of the 44th. The Adjutant-General was forthwith ordered in my hearing to expose this wrong-headed affair in a General Order, in which officers were reminded that "by thus undertaking enterprises without object and without use they risked the lives of valuable men and exposed themselves to failure." The officer who commanded the cavalry on that occasion paid for his temerity with the loss of an arm.

Sir Ralph Abercromby could not be prevailed upon to quit the field on the 21st of March when he received his mortal wound. He insisted upon remaining to the very last; but just as the enemy had retired beyond reach of cannon shot, he became enfeebled from excessive fatigue and loss of blood, and sat down in a small field-work, attended by many officers. Feeling thirsty, he inquired whether any person present happened to have a lemon. There was no lemon, but by some fortunate chance Captain Carey of the Guards happened to have a lime, which he had brought in his pocket from Marmorie. The lime was given to Sir Ralph, who, in the act of sucking it, fainted, and in a little time consented to be carried away. He was placed on a common bier, and all around him were rendering their assistance at that moment. I took a soldier's blanket that lay near the bier, and removing the slings in which it was packed, placed it under Sir Ralph's head. Whilst I was adjusting this pillow, Sir Ralph inquired, "What is this you are placing under my head?" I replied, "It is only a soldier's blanket, sir." "Only a soldier's blanket," rejoined Sir Ralph; "a soldier's blanket is a thing of great consequence, and you must send me the name of the man to whom this blanket belongs, that it may be restored to him." I promised that this should be done, and he seemed satisfied. I sent to the place of embarkation for the blanket, and found it there, Sir Ralph having left it, and given orders for its being restored.

Thus gloriously terminated the career of the illustrious Captain who restored the character of the British Army, and commenced that course of victory which has since been followed up by those who profited by his example.

Perhaps no man ever possessed the confidence of an army more than Sir Ralph

Abercromby did. His school was certainly one of constant peril, of constant hazard; and, in that respect, he may be said to have erred in risking so much, for it cannot be denied that he, upon whose life so much depends, ought not to expose that life unnecessarily; yet so it was (I understood) throughout every stage of his military life, and so it notoriously continued to be to his last moments. Sir Ralph Abercromby's element seemed to be Fire; wherever danger was, there only was he sure to be found. Apparently uncomfortable and impatient until arrived at the point at which there seemed to be the fiercest struggle, Sir Ralph felt quite at his ease, and appeared to become the more collected and the more clear and decisive in giving his orders as the dangers around him accumulated. Every officer and soldier under his command was quite aware of this, and hence the admiration with which the Irish soldiery in particular regarded him. Their notion was, that they were sure of both a fight and a victory whenever he came within reach of the enemy. When Sir Ralph Abercromby passed their tents, the soldiery ran out to look at him, crying, "Here he comes! here he comes!"—which meant, that is the man for us, that is the man to our minds.

Sir Ralph Abercromby was supposed to have great confidence in the Irish soldier, when under proper treatment and proper discipline. I had frequently heard, that when any critical service was to be undertaken whilst he commanded in the West Indies, Sir Ralph Abercromby employed the 27th Regiment upon it, if possible. In those days the 27th was composed of Irish to a man.

It were but a waste of time to discuss the glory of Sir Ralph Abercromby's achievements in Egypt. Thrown ashore upon a desert, with inadequate means of every sort, with an army of from 12,000 to 13,000 men only, Sir Ralph Abercromby, in twelve days, fought three general actions (including the landing at Aboukir, perhaps the most brilliant of the three), the result of which was the rescue of his favourite prize from Buonaparte, in the face of from 24,000 to 26,000 of the flower of his armies. There was not an officer or soldier in the French Army to which we were opposed in Egypt who had not served throughout Buonaparte's campaigns in Italy. In short, whatever view we take of the service performed in Egypt under Sir Ralph Abercromby, we must admit, as the Duke of York does in General Order, that the glory which must ever attach to that service, and to the memory of the man who conducted it, has not been surpassed in the military annals of the world.

March 1842.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

A CAMPAIGN AGAINST CRITICS—OUR FINANCIAL POSITION—WHAT MR ASQUITH "STICKS AT"—MR ASQUITH ON PITT—THE NEW WAR COUNCIL—PRESIDENT WILSON'S EPILOGUE—"THE INTEGRITY OF NEUTRAL RIGHTS"—GERMANY'S "PEACEFUL PENETRATION"—THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE.

If we might believe the speeches of our Ministers, we should be forced to conclude that they are conducting a campaign not against Germany but against their critics. With a strange timidity they clamour daily that they should be immune from censure or dispraise. They ask nothing less of the House of Commons and their countrymen than silent confidence and unquestioning approval. It is demanded of us that we should stand round our governors and proclaim with a smiling fervour how great they are and good. One sycophantic champion of Mr Asquith goes so far as to suggest that criticism should be spread over a wider area, and thus be attenuated before it reaches the sacrosanct back of the Prime Minister. "In other wars," says this ingenious personage, "an unrestrained correspondence from the front has exposed the fighting soldiers to sharp and angry criticism: in this war secrecy at the front has concentrated all criticism on the Cabinet." The infamous suggestions herein contained cannot be too severely condemned. In the first place, this Radical journalist implies that criticism is in war-time a frivolous necessity, which has no relation to the persons or deeds against which it is directed; that if a general commanding in the field be abused, the Minister sitting comfortably at home will go unscathed. Secondly, he pretends that the burden of death and wounds put upon our soldiers is not heavy enough for them to bear. Say what you will, he says in effect, of the men dying in the trenches, revive the irresponsible war-correspondent, imitate the enormities of the late W. H. Russell, re-echo the vulgar scandals of the Boer War. But spare, oh spare, the sensitive skins of our peerless twenty-two!

When more than a century ago William Pitt was fighting the battle of England against the greatest captain of all time, he was forced to face the virulent criticism of men who were the avowed friends of England's enemy, who hailed the news of a French victory with undisguised enthusiasm. To Pitt's honour be it said, he handled the traitors with a firm courage. The name of the worst offender—Charles James Fox—was struck from the roll of Privy Councillors, and many a self-satisfied "intellectual"

was sent across the sea to meditate his treachery in a penal settlement. To-day all this is changed. The pro-Germans in our midst are treated with a tender solicitude. Wherever they are found, in the Independent Labour Party or in that cosmopolitan coterie called the League of Democratic Control, they are not prevented from doing their best or their worst. The most widely advertised of them all, Mr R. Macdonald, is taken into the Government's innermost confidence. They at any rate are not the critics whose comments upon the war have so bitterly distressed our Ministers. The right of free speech is theirs, and if they can hire a public hall, which is seldom, they may extol Germany and decry England to their heart's content. The critics whom Mr Asquith fears are those who cherish but one hope, one desire: to prosecute the war with greater energy and a clearer foresight than our Ministers have hitherto displayed. They are no "professional whimperers"; they do not "keep us supplied and keep our enemies supplied with a daily diet of falsehood." They leave falsehood to those parasites who announce victories where no victories are, and who prophesy the smooth thing, that not a single leaf may be snatched from the wreath with which they have prematurely encircled the brow of the Prime Minister. Had the honest critics not spoken we should by this time have been driven out of France. For when the optimists of the war, headed by Mr Asquith, assured the country, in defiance of the truth, that we had no lack of munitions, the critics came forward fearlessly and forced upon an unwilling people a knowledge of our dearth. The worst scandal, this shortage of high explosive shells, that ever besmirched a Government at war, is still unexplained and unatoned for. Our Ministers, who are never tired of asserting that to their wisdom there is no alternative, have kept a profound silence concerning a failure which turned warfare into murder, and left our men at the mercy of a well-supplied enemy. The critics did not whimper; they told the truth; and it will be England's first duty, when peace is signed, to see that those who assumed the responsibility of the war should answer for their sin.

If the critics needed any further justification, it is to be found in the speech which Mr Asquith delivered in the House of Commons on November 2. In spite of all his brave words, the Prime Minister was manifestly upon his defence. He disclaimed the penitent's white sheet and candles. Yet the white sheet was plainly visible, and the candles glimmered in his hands. His speech was in the main a confession of failure, for which he took the full responsibility—indeed he could do no less, and it is not heavy upon him, since responsibility without the prospect of ruin is lightly borne—and which in his best parlia-

mentary manner he attempted to brazen out. We have failed in the Dardanelles. "I have never sustained a keener disappointment," said Mr Asquith, "than in the failure of this operation," as though the war were conducted for him and by him alone. We have failed in the Balkans, and it must be a vast consolation to Serbia in her agony that "we cannot allow her to become the prey of this sinister and nefarious combination." We have failed in economy. "The financial position to-day is serious. The extent to which we here in this country are buying goods abroad in excess of our exports is more than £30,000,000 per month, against an average of about £11,000,000 a month before the war." Thus Mr Asquith, that artist in failure, who, if he were not Prime Minister, would for this admission alone be classed among the whimpering critics. But it is worse than useless for him to bring this charge of financial incompetence against himself and his colleagues. Whose fault is it that our imports are thus dangerously in excess of our exports? The fault of our Government, which always believed that dogmatical Cobdenism is the cure for all the evils to which frail humanity is exposed. Confession indeed is idle unless it lead to reformation, and Mr Asquith—though he stands before the country as a penitent rake—makes no promise that he will improve. In this time of crisis, when every shilling is of importance, he acknowledges that our position is serious, and refrains from any suggestion of improvement. To remedy an evil would be an act of leadership, and real leadership Mr Asquith disclaims. "I would once more say"—such is the familiar commonplace which satisfies him—"with all the emphasis of which I am capable, that we cannot sustain the burden which this great war has laid upon us unless as individuals, as classes, as a community, and as a Government, we make and are prepared to make far greater sacrifices than we have hitherto done in the direction of retrenchment and economy." That is precisely what the critics, or whimperers, have been saying for months past, and they have met, except in one region, with an adequate response. Individuals, classes, communities are doing their utmost to economise. It is the Government alone which refuses to set an example of retrenchment, which, because the necessary expenditure is large, flings money about with a lavish hand and without forethought. Almost with pride Mr Asquith declared that our army is costing us between £250 and £300 per head per annum. He adjures everybody to bear this fact in mind. It would be more to the purpose if he proved that the Government was resolute to retrench in its own salaries, in the cost of its departments, in the superfluous payment of members, and that it would in the future practise a rigid economy

in the equipment and sustenance of the army. No other soldier in Europe is costing his country the princely sum of something between £250 and £300 a head.

The one great difference between Mr Asquith and his critics is that the critics do not merely point to abuses: they demand reform. He is content to enumerate with a strange kind of gusto the shortcomings of himself and his colleagues, as though he had a natural love of failure. "I am determined," he says,—"I stick at nothing—I am determined that we shall win this war." In this determination Mr Asquith is not singular. We are all determined to win this war, and we shall win this war, but at a far greater cost than we should incur, if only it were true that Mr Asquith "stuck at nothing." He sticks at so many things. He sticks at economy, and deems it sufficient to confess his sins and to ask others to be frugal. He sticks at criticism, and in a speech of defence admits that every word the critics have said is justified. He sticks at making up his mind, and preserves in war that same infirmity of doubt which seemed profitable to him in peace. So delicately does he preserve his balance, that he is ready at a moment's notice to descend upon the softer side of the fence. In nothing has he been more obviously at fault than in the matter of national service. He has allowed his colleagues to discuss as they would the question upon which, after all, the issue of the war depends. This Minister has opened his eyes in wide amaze at the enormous number of recruits which he said were coming in week by week. That Minister, more wisely informed, has deplored, as well he might, that recruits were not coming in at all. And Mr Asquith has discreetly held his tongue until he should compile his sins in a single speech. At last he has told us what he thinks of national service, and it amounts to precisely nothing. On this subject, as upon all others, he holds several opinions. "I have no abstract or *a priori* objection of any sort or kind to compulsion in time of war," says he. That sounds well enough until you are told a little later that he is a "strong voluntarist." Thus he might declare that though he had no abstract or *a priori* objection to the Established Church in Wales, he was yet a strong disestablisher. That though he had no abstract objection to the Union of Great Britain and Ireland, he was still an ardent Home Ruler. Since, then, abstract objections have no weight with him, by what is he guided? By public utility, or by the hope of votes? Assuredly it is not for reasons of public utility that he holds fast to the principle of voluntary service. "I will make a further admission," he says, "if admission it may be called"—an ingenious and lawyer-like qualification—"and that is, that I think our system of voluntary recruiting . . . operates, as it has been hitherto

practised, in a haphazard, capricious, and, to some extent, unjust way." It is difficult to answer for a politician, but we might suppose that even Mr Asquith does not habitually prefer what he deems to be haphazard, capricious, and unjust. Why, then, for sixteen months has he adhered, in spite of critical warnings, to a system which, by his own confession, "lets through some things which ought not to be allowed to escape, and keeps some things which had better be let through"?

One conclusion only is possible: that Mr Asquith refuses to abandon a method which he condemns with as much lucidity as is possible for him, that he has an abstract and *a priori* love of what is haphazard, capricious, and unjust. And having appropriated all that his critics in the reviews and newspapers have said, having made even their own metaphor his own, he lectures them, like a pedagogue, for speaking at all, and throws the responsibility of the future upon Lord Derby. He displays the same incapacity for making up his mind, the same dislike of action in discussing the size of the Cabinet. He is all for doing two things at the same time. "I do not propose to change the size of the Cabinet," he says; "but of course there is a great deal to be said for having one . . . comparatively small body of men who will deal with the daily exigencies of the State." Again he faces both ways; and having discovered "of course" a great deal to be said in favour of one comparatively small body, he declares that the ultimate responsibility should rest with the Cabinet. The plan is one after Mr Asquith's own heart, as it avoids a decision, and inspires each one of the debating society with the proud hope that he is indispensable to the conduct of the war. But in nothing did Mr Asquith show his misunderstanding of the art of government so plainly as when he attempted to hide his derelictions behind the precedent of William Pitt. "Mr Pitt," said he, "when he carried on the great war against France more than one hundred years ago, had, I think, a Cabinet of seven or nine, but the exiguity in size of that Cabinet did not prevent it from committing great blunders, and the country from suffering from many strokes of ill-fortune." This brilliant sally was greeted with "laughter" and "hear, hear." We know not whether the House laughed with Mr Asquith or at him, whether it was displaying an honest critical faculty or a supreme ignorance. Perhaps Mr Asquith thinks that as his Cabinet is three times as large as Mr Pitt's, it possesses a threefold efficiency. Indeed, he would have been wiser to have left Mr Pitt out of the question. Mr Pitt's "strokes of ill-fortune" were due to difficulties of which Mr Asquith knows nothing—an opponent of genius and disloyal allies, one of which —the gallant Prussia — witnessed the defeat of an English army with sardonic satisfaction

and without striking a blow, and each of which in turn made a separate peace behind England's back. As to Mr Pitt's "great blunders," we know not what they were. But this we do know, that so long as he governed England nothing was lost through indecision or inactivity. He was incapable of standing up before the House of Commons to admit failure without uttering a word of apology or giving a single hint of amendment. None could have brought the charge against him which Sir Edward Carson has brought against Mr Asquith's debating society—that he had no plan, no policy, that he was merely waiting to see what would turn up. Napoleon once said that if only he had had such men as William Pitt to serve him, he would have been master of Europe. We do not think that the Kaiser yearns for the co-operation of Mr Asquith.

However, the War Council is appointed, and we can only hope that it will display courage and energy. It is composed with a nice regard to the claims of the foolish thing called Party Government, which expired a year ago. Two Tories are a delicate counterpoise to two Radicals, and Mr Asquith holds the balance. We should have greater faith in the Council's activity if only it were cut adrift from the rest of the twenty-two. But we must take what we can get, and cherish the hope that the five civilians, who have made themselves responsible for the conduct of the war, will yield at every step to the advice of experts. The worst is that the supreme power is left in the hands of Mr Asquith, who is a House of Commons man and nothing more. In that assembly he holds the same sort of ascendancy that a head boy holds in a school. He has been there a long time, and the newcomers pay him a sort of involuntary respect. But he is not, and never has been, a statesman. He has given his mind to the management of a body which long ago ceased to devote itself to the welfare of its country. Content if he could hold together the *disjecta membra* of a refractory coalition, he has forgotten in a flood of words the very meaning of action. When he won the laughter of the House by a disparagement of Pitt, he overlooked one other advantage which that statesman possessed over the most adroit politician. Pitt never relaxed the discipline which it is the first business of a Prime Minister to impose upon his colleagues. He spoke always for his whole Cabinet, and he permitted no one to express an opinion which was not consonant with his own. To enforce this necessary discipline has always been beyond the power of Mr Asquith, whose Cabinet has ceased to be an organised and corporate whole. Its members say what they like and think what they like. They contradict one another freely upon platforms, and some of them have their special supporters in the press, who do not scruple to reveal the dissensions and bickerings

which interrupt the deliberations of what ought to be the unanimous Council of the Empire. We shall win this war, and we shall win it in spite of obstacles which we have wilfully thrown in our path. The price we shall pay for being ruled by politicians incapacitated for governance by ten years of intrigue will be heavy in men and money. But there is one thing at which Mr Asquith does stick—at resignation. And since there is no method known to our constitution of getting rid of him, since politicians, who make a vast parade of shouldering responsibility, are completely irresponsible, and cannot be punished for their misdeeds, like the mere soldiers and sailors who do the real work of defence, the presence of Mr Asquith is assured us until the end of the war, and we must face the future with a full consciousness of a serious handicap.

But, while he remains in office, and he will quit office only at his own pleasure, it would be well if he remembered always that the business of a Prime Minister in time of war is not to fail but to succeed. Something more is at stake than Mr Asquith's dignity. The future happiness of the British Empire and of the human race is at stake, and this happiness cannot be assured by any man who admits the word failure into his vocabulary. Upon the record of too many enterprises, hazarded during the last year, are inscribed the words "too late," the natural corollary of "wait and see." We were too late in dealing with the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*. We were too late at Coronel, at Antwerp, at the Dardanelles. Yet if we may believe Mr Asquith and Mr Churchill, we have ground of disappointment, not of shame. Mr Churchill has retired from active management of the war, and his parting oration proves how sound was his determination to go. He made a speech in which he said a vast deal about Mr Churchill and very little about England. He defended his "gambles" with an easy serenity. "Gambles," indeed! Pitt preferred the word "security," and though Pitt was neither lawyer nor rhetorician, though his style was plain as the style of a King's Speech, though he was incapable of hedging his statements about with "if and when," or "unless and until," mere gobbets of legal jargon, and not English at all, he heard more clearly the call of England's need and England's grandeur than do his talkative and ingenious successors.

Mr Asquith, in his double capacity of lawyer and politician, is an expert in preambles. He once committed himself to the statement that the preamble was often the most important part of a bill. On another occasion, less happily inspired, he threw over a preamble altogether, though he had defined it himself as "a debt of honour." The American note, which was presented some weeks ago to the British Gov-

ernment, gave a practical adherence to Mr Asquith's earlier opinion. It is true that it turned its preamble into an epilogue, but it put into this epilogue the statement, worthy a preamble to itself, which all will read with the greatest interest and amusement. "This task of championing neutral rights," says the American note, "which have received the sanction of the civilised world, against the lawless conduct of belligerents arising out of the bitterness of the great conflict which is now wasting the countries of Europe, the United States unhesitatingly assumes, and to the accomplishment of that task it will devote its energies, exercising always that impartiality which from the outbreak of the war it has sought to exercise in its relations with the warring nations." Was there ever a more brilliant stroke of humour than this? We cannot but feel grateful to the United States for thus dispersing the general gloom with so fine an excuse for laughter. The United States unhesitatingly assumes the task of championing neutral rights! Does it indeed? Has it so short a memory that it has already forgotten the sad case of Belgium? There is a certain convention, signed some eight years since, which has these for its two first articles: "(1) The territory of neutral Powers is inviolable. (2) Belligerents are forbidden to move across the territory of a neutral Power troops or convoys, either of supplies or munitions of war." On August 4, 1914, Germany outraged the neutrality of Belgium. What did the United States do? She looked on with indifference, while Great Britain took up the duty of chastising Germany for her wanton breach of international honour. What has the United States, or indeed any other neutral, done since that ill-omened day to champion neutral rights? Nothing whatever; and now when she is minded to send a note to Great Britain, the United States boasts in an epilogue of the task, which she "unhesitatingly assumes."

Truly there is not an episode in the war more disgraceful than this attitude of the neutral Powers. No less than Germany herself are they responsible for the complete demolition of international law. They put their willing signature to conventions, and saw these conventions torn to shreds without a murmur. We see no reason why we should ever trust them again or invite them to our international councils. By their own act and deed they have made themselves outlaws, and if we are wise we shall in the future be content to rely upon our own strength and the strength of our Allies to guard our own honour. Had the neutrals been serious when they plighted their word at the Hague, every infraction by Germany of international law should have affected them as it affected the belligerents. The neutral countries kept a profound silence; they raised no

hand, they made no protest; and now one of them boasts that it unhesitatingly assumes the task of championing the integrity of neutral rights!

The legal argument of the American note will be answered by lawyers. That is their province, and doubtless they are at home in it. We will merely point out in passing that we have done nothing that is not sanctioned by American precedents, allowing always for the inevitable changes in naval warfare, and that American business men by passing their merchandise through Holland and Scandinavia into Germany have made enormous fortunes by trading with our enemies. That, we should have thought, might have satisfied them. It is inevitable also, in the face of protest, to contrast the conduct of Great Britain with the conduct of Germany towards the United States. We have not murdered American women and children travelling peacefully upon the high seas. We have not sunk passenger steamers carrying their human freight lawfully from port to port. We have done no more than use our sea-power, as we have a right to use it, and have prevented our adversaries, so far as is possible, from supplying themselves with food and the munitions of war from abroad. Yet the United States seems to see no difference between the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the *Ancona* and our putting what check we think necessary upon their trade with Germany. Mr Wilson must settle his domestic affairs as he deems proper. We would only remind him that he has hitherto done nothing to avenge the murder of his citizens, and that he gives an impression to the world that his countrymen, profuse in the shedding of blood, are yet niggardly in the risking of dollars.

A well-known American has urged us, in excuse, not to pay any attention to the American Government, because the elections are approaching, and because the President is merely playing the old game of twisting the lion's tail. We should pay the United States a very poor compliment if we took this easy view. In this crisis of the world's history they are false to themselves and to their fellows who listen only to the demands of parochial politics. Again, we have heard it said a thousand times that the United States is a young and irresponsible country. But surely it is growing up by this time, and even if it shirks the obvious duty of manhood, it should still face other nations with a truthful eye and a full sense of its responsibility. Indeed, we refuse to accept the legend of the lion's tail, and we can hope only that our Government, in replying to the United States, will refuse to relax by an inch the hold which she has upon the life and commerce of Germany. When Abraham Lincoln decided to blockade the Southern ports, the cotton-spinners of Lancashire acquiesced in his decision, though it brought them to the verge of starvation.

If we have any trouble with

the United States it is largely our own fault. We have always approached it with a fantastic delicacy as though it were made of glass and would shiver at the first impact of the truth. The result has been that the United States refuses to believe in our fortitude. Its citizens regard us as an inexpert poker-player who will never call their bluff. Such a manifest misunderstanding is bad for us and is bad for the United States. We should better respect the Americans, and they would better respect us, if we treated them with the same firmness with which we have been wont to treat our nearer neighbours. No man is deceived by a pretence of ill-deserved flattery; all that is wanted is the candour on our side which has ever been denied, and there would be far fewer disputes, a more genuine friendship between Great Britain and the United States than at present. We regret that the United States has neglected its duty as a neutral — that, in fact, it has hesitated to assume the task of championing the integrity of neutral rights; we regret that it has permitted Germany so grossly to lower its prestige, that after the war it will seem rather a rich than a great nation. But we see no reason why our good relations should be disturbed, so long as we may regard the Americans as men who can look upon facts without flinching, and who are not so sternly set upon the dollar-hunt that they are blind to the danger in which a German victory would involve them. We are told by the American press that the vast majority of American citizens does not understand that the Allies are fighting their battle also. We can hardly believe them thus short-sighted. Politics is as the breath of their life, and of what use is politics if it do not show them, even after a long experience of Bernstorff and his assassins and incendiaries, whither a German triumph would lead them?

One of our many sentimentalists has been adjuring us to take the Germans again to our hearts and our homes when the war is over. For our part, we have never, even in the heyday of our slumber, kept a place for a Hun at our fireside. And we see no reason why we should abandon a well-grounded prejudice when our policy of exclusion has proved just and right. Evil communications corrupt good manners, and England will gain no good purpose if she again, in a spirit of weak compromise, encourages the society of malefactors. Germany is a law unto herself: she prefers to live in an atmosphere of perverse, unbridled arrogance, and we can only hope that, when peace is signed, we shall make no attempt to disturb her solitude.

By some it has been said in excuse of the Germans that pride and insolence have recently debauched them, that they who in 1870 were humane soldiers are now ravening monsters. They were in 1870 precisely what they are to-day. The ill deeds which

they did against the French five-and-forty years ago have been duly set forth in the pages of this Magazine; the record stands imperishable in the blue-books of France; and no more need be said at present. Neither nations nor men become base suddenly, and we shall be justified, by a bitter experience of the past, if henceforth we exclude the Germans from our markets as from our life. For many centuries our simplicity, the child of ignorance and intrigue, has been imposed upon by the Germans. That designing policy of peaceful penetration — a policy which makes war in time of peace under the cloak of commerce and friendship — is as old as Germany itself. If any still entertain doubts upon the injury done us from the beginning by the German merchants, let them read Mr Ian Colvin's admirable treatise, 'The Germans in England' ('National Review' Office). Mr Colvin tells a story of greed and encroachment which can neither be palliated nor gainsaid. The Germans have always been our enemies; we have always been their dupes; and this war will not have been fought in vain if an end be put once and for always to the sly and dangerous domination of our natural foes.

It has ever been a sign of the English vanity that we have suffered foreigners gladly. With a kind of pride we have pointed to the injury we have done our own folk by conferring handsome privileges upon the alien. In the reign of Henry VIII. English citizens were severely punished for attempting to hold their own against a mob of strangers, and it agrees with Shakespeare's genuinely English temper that he should have contributed to a half-forgotten play, "Sir Thomas More," the scene in which are set forth the woes which the people of London suffered at the hands of strangers, and the passion wherewith that people protected itself against outrage. For the rest we earnestly commend Mr Colvin's book to our readers. He has followed with sureness and foresight an untrodden path, and he has reached the goal of his argument with a success which all will admire. For many years it was the famous Hanseatic League which controlled the commerce and finance of Europe. It worked in secret and for its own ends. England favoured it far above the leagues of other nations, and for its sake neglected the interests of her own folk. From time to time the danger was perceived and then forgotten. Matthew Paris was among those who did not leave the poor, fleeced Englishmen without a warning. "England," said he, "was a vineyard without wall or watchman, open to the pillage of every vagrant." At any rate it was never closed to that mysterious league of commerce, which existed wholly and solely to push its own trade. Now and again there arose men, able and willing to

withstand the plots of the German traders. Simon de Montfort and Warwick the King-maker did what they could, each in his time, for the security of England. But the cunning of the Hun still prevailed, as it has prevailed in our own day, to the detriment and dishonour of many a deluded nation. The great company of our Merchant Adventurers worked for the safety of their guilds and our Empire, and worked too often in vain. In 1474 the ambassadors of Dantzig obtained such terms at Utrecht that their boast—"we have made an end of England"—seemed to be justified. Thus with varying fortune the Hanseatic League did its best to control the trade of England, until Elizabeth, always English at heart and well-advised, brought their plots to nothing. In 1597 the Augsburg Decree banished all English merchants from the Empire. Elizabeth's reply was immediate and conclusive. "We have thought it agreeable to our honour in the meantime to command all such as are here within our realm, appertaining to the Hanse towns, situate in the Empire to depart out of our Dominions, charging them by the four-and-twentieth day of this month they do depart out of this realm . . . witness ourself at Westminster, the thirteenth of January, in the fortieth year of our reign." The rest is told with a pathos, which proves how profound their loss was felt by the Germans themselves. "On the 4th August 1598"—thus runs the report—"we at last, because it could never be otherwise, with gloom in our hearts, the Alderman Langerman in front and we others after him, went out of the door, and the door was shut behind us; also we did not want there to pass the night. May God have compassion."

Thus ended for a while the dominion in our midst of German trade. But the Germans are a patient race, and patiently they awaited the day of their return. For many a long year the policy of Free Trade, a blind, unthinking reverence for the name of Cobden, have given them back all the privileges which Elizabeth's wisdom denied them. In the sacred name of cheapness we have allowed them to dump upon us whatever rubble they thought we would accept for merchandise. Our ports have been open to them; theirs have been closed to us; and they smiled no doubt as they saw us accomplices in the prosperity, which they have turned to good account in war. But the day of their commercial supremacy is, we hope, at an end. Henceforth we shall not chatter of "home and homeliness" for others. We shall be once more at home in our own land, the masters in our own rifled houses. For one thing, the last year has proved irrevocably that the Germans are not capable of an equal friendship, and that ever after they must find their profit, where alone they will find their friends, within the borders of their fatherland.

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Printed by William Blackwood and Sons.

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BINDERY, IPSWICH.

KW-387-917